



TAMKEEN

**West Bank and Gaza Civil Society and
Democracy Strengthening Project**

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF TAMKEEN SERVICE DELIVERY GRANTS

Dr. Souad Dajani



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ACRONYMS

ACAD	Arab Center for Agricultural Development
APS	Annual Program Statement
ARIJ	Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem
ATF	Arab Thought Forum
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCSNS	Care for Children with Special Needs Society
CDU	Cooperative Development Unit
CEOHS	Center for Environmental and Occupation Health Sciences
CFI	Civil Forum Institute
CFTA	Culture and Free Thought Association
COP	Chief of Party
CPRS	Center for Palestinian Research and Statistics
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSS	Civil Society Specialist
D&G	Democracy and Governance
FNF	Friedrich Naumann Foundation
GCMHP	Gaza Community Mental Health Programme
ICCA	Information Case Management and Client Advocacy Unit
IPYL	International Palestinian Youth League
IR	Intermediate result
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPTs	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
PARC	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PHA	Palestinian Hypertension Association
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PWWSD	Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development
SD	Service Delivery
SO	Strategic Objective
UNDP	United Nations Democracy Programme
UPMRC	Union of Medical Relief Committees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WATC	Women's Affairs Technical Committee

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study is to assess how effective Tamkeen service delivery grants with a democracy and governance component are in “increasing the participation of Palestinian civil society organizations [CSOs] in the public discourse” (USAID Intermediate Result [IR] 3.1) and in promoting governance and accountability in Palestine (USAID Strategic Objective [SO] 3). Comparisons with regular democracy and governance grants are made in terms of sub-IRs 3.1.1, “increased capacity of CSOs to participate in public discourse”; 3.1.2, “CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues”; and 3.1.3, “CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues.”

Three main research questions guide the methodology:

- Is including democracy and governance elements in service delivery grants an effective way to increase the participation of CSOs in the public discourse?
- Is this grant-making strategy more or less effective than traditional democracy and governance grants — both in general and with respect to reaching specific groups (for example, women, youth, the disabled, and rural populations)?
- Does encouraging CSOs that deliver services to include democracy and civil society elements in their programs affect programs beyond those funded by Tamkeen?

Measurable indicators were identified and a representative sample of Tamkeen grantees were selected for interviews.

The main findings in this study were, briefly:

- There are significant indicators of progress and positive outcomes; they point to the strong potential of service delivery organizations to realize the stated objectives of Tamkeen’s program. Nonetheless, the absence of built-in impact assessment mechanisms at CSOs makes it difficult to arrive at definitive conclusions.
- Because service delivery organizations are providing essential services to Palestinians, they are well placed to integrate the learning and practice of democracy and governance directly into the services they provide. People insist they do not want “talk”; they are more receptive to democracy and governance activities when these are tied to tangible benefits.
- In practice, the effectiveness of service delivery compared to democracy and governance organizations rests on many factors, including capacity of CSOs, understanding of democracy and governance, integration of knowledge and activities into program design and implementation, target groups, and general resources.

- Tamkeen grants have contributed to the effectiveness of both service delivery and primarily democracy and governance organizations in realizing sub-IRs, as evidenced by increased capacity of CSOs, effectiveness in aggregating citizen issues, and effectiveness in disseminating information. This impact is most pronounced among smaller CSOs, those in remote areas, and those in the Gaza Strip, where service delivery organizations predominate.
- Other comparisons between service delivery and primarily democracy and governance grants indicate that each type operates somewhat differently in terms of target groups, activities, and relationships with the Palestinian Authority. Each, therefore, fills a separate niche in Palestinian society. Interviewees often alluded, however, to the low level of cooperation between CSOs — particularly democracy and governance organizations — as an issue that should be addressed in order to enhance the effectiveness of CSOs in Palestine.
- No matter what the type of grant, the most significant impact appears to be on youth and children. This finding affirms Tamkeen's strategic focus on youth. Civic education and youth empowerment initiatives seem to be especially effective.
- The impact of the grants on instilling democratic knowledge and practices is most pronounced when participation is built directly into the logic and mission of the organization and integrated directly into activities, particularly service delivery.
- There appear to be increased knowledge of democracy and governance issues and some changes in skills and practice among target groups. However, it is not clear that these have so far been accompanied by changes in values and attitudes.
- Tamkeen grants may have made a contribution to policies and laws. Both service delivery and democracy and governance organizations have increased their monitoring of legislation, improved their capacity to draft recommendations and bring these to the attention of legislators, and disseminated information to citizens on relevant issues. A more distinct impact is that Tamkeen grants can be seen as instilling advocacy skills, bringing citizens into contact with their legislators, and achieving changes at the local level.
- Virtually everyone interviewed cited the enormous difficulties facing Palestinians under occupation and Israeli restrictions during the Intifada. Closure, curfews, and deteriorating economic and social conditions impose huge burdens, particularly on service delivery CSOs. Even under the best of circumstances, as interviewees pointed out, democracy-building is a long-term process; the true impact of the Tamkeen grants may not be fully appreciated for some time.
- Palestinian CSOs are extremely disturbed, even angered and insulted, by the USAID Anti-Terrorism Certificate. The majority of those interviewed insist they would refuse to sign one. Tamkeen grantees pointed out that mandating this requirement would weaken rather than strengthen Palestinian civil society — it would defeat the very purpose for which Tamkeen was originally set up.

Impact Assessment Study: Service Delivery Grants for the Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening Project

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of Tamkeen service delivery grants in increasing the participation of Palestinian civil society organizations (CSOs) in the public discourse. The study assesses the effectiveness of channeling grants through the service delivery (SD) sector compared with making traditional democracy and governance grants.

More specifically, the study evaluates the extent to which enhancing democracy and governance has been integrated as a clear goal in the activities of service delivery CSOs, and with what results. These assessments respond specifically to USAID Strategic Objective (SO) 3, “more responsive and accountable governance” and Intermediate Result (IR) 3.1, “increased participation of CSOs in public discourse” and its subsets:

3.1.1 “increased capacity of CSOs to participate in public discourse”

3.1.2 “CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues”

3.1.3 “CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues.”

1.1 .Tamkeen Objectives and Reassessment Following the Intifada

USAID’s mission in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) was established in 1995. In line with USAID’s approach to postconflict situations and state-building elsewhere in the world, part of its mandate in the OPTs is to support democracy and governance projects in the service of state-building. CSOs are viewed as the lynchpins in this effort:

The Agency believes that democratic institutions are key to a well-functioning government, and that there are direct links among democratic institutions, good governance, and sustainable development.¹

USAID initially awarded grants to seven prominent Palestinian CSOs working in the field of democracy and governance.² By 1999 USAID had begun to reassess its program and the burden of managing direct grants. USAID was also strategically reevaluating its support for only then-six CSOs (restricted to Ramallah and the Jerusalem area) when Palestinian civil society boasted well over 650 viable organizations elsewhere in the OPTs.³

¹ USAID, Center for Democracy and Governance, “Democracy and Governance: A Conceptual Framework,” Technical Publications Series (November 1998), p. 5 (see excerpts from this document in Annex H). Civil society sits at the nexus between democracy and governance on the one hand and service delivery on the other. SD organizations are viewed as especially well placed to engage the population in D&G activities; with careful attention to the design and delivery of such programs, they may do so more effectively than traditional D&G organizations.

² These were PANORAMA, Arab Thought Forum (ATF), Women’s Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), Palestinian Working Women’s Society for Development (PWWSD), Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), Civil Forum Institute (CFI) and the Center for Palestinian Research and Statistics (CPRS). CPRS was later dropped. PANORAMA, ATF, and CFI later continued as Tamkeen grantees. For an evaluation of USAID’s D&G program, see Sara Roy, *Evaluation: Civil Society Portfolio. Democracy and Governance Strategic Objective. USAID Funding and the Role of Six Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Promoting Democratic Process Activities. USAID No. 294-2002-019.*

³ Interview with Martha Myers, Democracy and Governance team leader (USAID).

USAID's Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening project — Tamkeen — was first conceived as a continuation of USAID's original mandate to support CSOs promoting democracy and good governance. It coincided with the Palestinian Authority's efforts to cement its executive powers in areas under its jurisdiction. The Tamkeen project was designed to preserve the independent "space" of Palestinian CSOs in the public discourse, to strengthen the participation of Palestinian CSOs in the democratic process, and to support CSOs as catalysts for more accountable and transparent governance under the Palestinian Authority (PA).

As originally conceived Tamkeen would increase the diversity, range, and numbers of Palestinian CSO grantees. Smaller CSOs and those in remote or marginalized areas would be eligible, and the project would ensure representation from the Gaza Strip, to which 40 percent of grants were to be allocated. The number of Palestinian CSOs receiving grants would immediately jump from six to about 40, and the program would include training, capacity and institutional building, and technical development as needed for smaller CSOs, as well as support for projects undertaken in collaboration with other institutions. Management of the grants portfolio was shifted to Chemonics.⁴

The launch of the Tamkeen project in September 2000 coincided with the eruption of the Second Intifada. Shortly thereafter, in response to emerging priorities, particularly the harsh conditions of daily life under occupation, USAID and project organizers decided to expand the scope of work beyond traditional democracy and governance activities. Recognizing that no other sector could meet the critical needs of Palestinians at this time, it was decided that regular democracy and governance grants would be supplemented by grants to Palestinian service delivery nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) whose work fell under USAID-defined strategic objectives in health, education, water and the environment, and economic development.

With the revised focus, service delivery grants would be given to Palestinian CSOs based on their incorporation of a clear democracy and governance component into their plans and activities — in conformity with the original purpose and goal of the Tamkeen (and USAID) project. These democracy and governance components could take many forms, depending on the mission, capacity, constituents, and other characteristics of each service delivery organization. Activities would contribute to realizing USAID's IR 3.1 and its subsets; they could be workshops on civil education for youth, information on disability issues, town-hall meetings to invite broader citizen participation, petitions to government representatives to change laws in a specific sector, collaboration with other CSOs on an issue of mutual interest, or a variety of other options. Tamkeen emphasized CSOs whose projects benefited women, youth, the disabled, and other marginalized sectors of society.

By the end of September 2003, three years into its five-year program, Tamkeen had committed a total of approximately \$9.1 million out of the \$16 million allocated for grants over the life of the project (summarized in Table 1). These grants were awarded to a total of approximately 70 CSOs, many of which have received two or more grants (mainly renewals of funded projects). A great many grants are also still underway. This assessment looks mainly at the impact of projects already completed by Tamkeen grantees.

⁴ For more information, see Tamkeen, *Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening Project*, First Annual Work Plan, December 2000-December 2001 (July 15, 2001); Tamkeen, *West Bank/Gaza Strip Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening Project*, Second Annual Work Plan, April 23, 2002-December 31, 2002 (June 21, 2002); and Tamkeen, *West Bank/Gaza Strip Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening Project*, Third Annual Work Plan 2003 (February 5, 2003).

Table 1
Summary of Grants Awarded From the Project's Inception to the
End of the Third Quarter of 2003

	Total Number & Value of Grants Awarded (Life of Project to September 30, 2003)
Simplified Grants	108 grants @ \$8,639,903.13
Fixed-Obligation Grants (FOGs)	75 grants @ \$480,893.99
Totals	183 grants @ \$9,120,797.12

1.2. The Changing Role of Palestinian CSOs⁵

Early manifestations of civil society organizing in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip date to the beginning of Israeli rule. Charitable societies, labor movements, human rights efforts, and other initiatives came to occupy a clear space between the average citizen and the occupation authorities. These groups worked diligently to aggregate citizen concerns and to disseminate information, particularly abroad, on Israeli human rights violations.

In the 1970s, popular committees that were organized around medical relief, agricultural and educational services, and women and youth concerns successfully combined service delivery with efforts to mobilize and empower civilians. Rooted in their own PLO factional groups, these committees strengthened the *sumud* ("steadfastness") of the local population and gained strength, recognition, and popularity from their organic relationship to the "ground." Their goal was to withstand Israeli restrictions and carve out a space for themselves and for the very existence of CSOs under the difficult conditions of Israeli rule.

Several of the more prominent groups gradually institutionalized themselves as "development" organizations in sectors where Israeli services were lacking.⁶ Grassroots committees played a prominent role in service delivery and empowerment efforts during the first Intifada. Throughout, neither these organizations nor the population they served lost sight of the overriding *national* priority — to fully remove Israeli occupation and achieve national self-determination within a sovereign Palestinian state.

1.2.1. Palestinian CSOs and the Palestinian Authority

With the launching of the Oslo process in 1993 the *raison-d'être* of Palestinian CSOs began to shift to the functions they would assume in an anticipated postconflict phase. The installation of the PA in 1994 gave added impetus for Palestinian CSOs to move from a direct struggle to end occupation (which would mainly be the responsibility of official negotiators) to assuming the role of genuine civil society interlocutors in establishing a viable democratic

⁵ This section summarizes the main points of a more detailed essay on the subject; see Souad Dajani, *Palestinian Civil Society — From Intifada to Intifada*, in Annex F. For a list of selected readings on Palestinian civil society, see Annex G.

⁶ The World Bank estimates that as of 1994, Palestinian NGOs accounted for some 60 percent of primary health care services and 100 percent of all programs for the disabled and preschool children, as well as a significant proportion of agriculture, housing, welfare services, and small business credits.

system of governance — precisely the role envisioned by SO 3, “more responsive and accountable governance.”

Two main issues dominated the relationship between Palestinian CSOs and the PA: 1) the form and character of the PA as an accountable and democratic system of governance, rooted in the rule of law, characterized by independence of the judiciary and transparency; and 2) the legal status of CSOs, including licensing and registration procedures, independent access to funding and competition over funds, and preservation of their independent space in the public discourse.

Contention over licensing procedures came to a head in 1999 when Yasser Arafat announced a decision to place Palestinian NGOs under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior instead of the Ministry of Justice. The launching of a massive campaign by NGOs against the new law, as well as vocal criticism by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), delayed the actual signing of the law until 2000.⁷

A major crisis over funding had erupted around 1995 when the World Bank launched an initiative to establish a US\$15 million trust fund for Palestinian NGOs. The PA was concerned that channeling funds directly to CSOs would reduce its own funding and leave CSOs free to operate without PA oversight. International donor agencies and CSOs, on the other hand, viewed some degree of fiscal autonomy as essential to preserving an independent space for CSOs in the public discourse and to their work for a democratic and accountable system of government.⁸

1.2.2. Service Delivery and Democratization and National Independence

Palestinian CSOs continued to pursue both democracy and governance and service delivery activities — not all of which would or could be assumed by the PA.⁹ In key sectors, notably health, agriculture, and education, strong collaborative relationships developed between PA institutions and CSOs. These efforts would contribute to strengthening Palestinian society and arming it, so to speak, with institutions, mechanisms, and development initiatives that would prepare Palestinians for the challenges ahead in the pursuit of their national goals.

In the years after Oslo, and in response both to internal needs and the priorities of international agencies, CSOs increasingly articulated their activities in the language of “civil society,” “democratization,” “nation-building and the rule of law,” “transparency and accountable government,” and so on. The ongoing need for service delivery programs was also articulated within this framework, especially where Palestinian CSOs could demonstrate that their projects were aimed at somehow holding the PA accountable and democratizing its rule.

Palestinian CSOs proliferated to take advantage of the increased attention to their role in this evolving context and quickly attracted donor funds. Palestinian civil society became an entrenched feature of the post-Oslo landscape that neither the PA nor the Israeli occupiers

⁷ See Annex F for more information.

⁸ For more on this and subsequent developments, see Annex F.

⁹ The initial channeling of development funds to the PA led to a loss of funding to several service-oriented NGOs. These had to shut down, as were 60 percent of NGO-run primary health care centers. The PA was not equipped to assume financial or organizational responsibility in these sectors (especially in remote or rural areas), or to provide services to marginalized populations where NGOs already had special expertise.

could dislodge. This was the foundation upon which the Tamkeen project would later be implemented.¹⁰

The underlying reality of occupation remained. Though Palestinian CSOs did not completely divert their attention away from occupation, many faced criticism for focusing almost exclusively on the PA and neglecting other national priorities.¹¹ Critics, pointing to the “NGO-ification” of Palestinian society, accused CSOs of abandoning their role as part of an “infrastructure of resistance,” responsive to their mass base, and instead becoming accountable to foreign sources of funding.¹² Other analysts contended that Palestinian CSOs remained committed to strengthening their capacity and voice in Palestinian society and determined to increase their space under PA rule while preparing Palestinian society to withstand further Israeli encroachments.¹³

1.3. The Second Intifada and Beyond – Implications for Palestinian CSOs

The launching of the Second Intifada in September 2000 added to the responsibilities assumed by Palestinian CSOs. While attempting to retain their original mission and maintain their activities, they have had to deliver essential services to increasing numbers of increasingly destitute and desperate people.

The delivery of vital health services, welfare assistance, food and water, and other basics seriously strained the resources of Palestinian CSOs. Funds that had been allocated to development or other long-term projects had to be channeled into meeting emergency and humanitarian needs.

Restrictions on freedom of movement as a result of closure, curfew, and checkpoints have intensified in recent years, making it exceedingly difficult for Palestinian CSO staff, as well as international volunteers and employees, to move outside their immediate locality. Palestinian CSO staff are often unable to reach their workplace or project sites and may be prohibited from travel to meet with colleagues, beneficiaries, or (in the case of this study) Tamkeen project staff. Tamkeen grants have enabled Palestinian CSOs to confront some of these challenges, but the obstacles CSOs face in implementing their projects and activities under occupation cannot be overstated.¹⁴

¹⁰ Independent analysts recognize the impact of CSOs whose projects combine service delivery with a D&G component. These CSOs are praised *precisely* because – through their integration of activities – they have succeeded in establishing a space for themselves as CSOs in the public discourse; in so doing, they have elicited recognition and a voice both in Palestine and abroad (see The Advocacy Project, in Annex E).

¹¹ Palestinian CSOs share many of the concerns and criticisms about the PA held by the international community, namely, charges of corruption, mismanagement, favoritism, lack of transparency, and so on – problems that these CSOs have pledged to tackle. However, Palestinian CSOs differ in the view that the crisis of legitimacy in the PA is not restricted to its failure to democratize but reflects its role in facilitating the continuation of occupation by Israel. This was a major consideration behind the launching of the Second Intifada in September 2000.

¹² Graham Usher, “Addressing the Crisis,” *News From Within*, 13 (December 1997): 48-49. Majed Nassar warns, “If NGOs lose their privileged connection to their constituencies, they lose not only their right to exist but also the moral fiber of their work,” see M. Nassar, “Palestinian NGOs: Prospects in the Post-Oslo Era,” Part II, *News From Within*, 14 (December 1998): 29. See also Selected Readings on Palestinian CSOs (Annex G).

¹³ One could cite here, for example, the work of the Union of Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC). See also Mustafa Barghouti, *Palestinian NGOs and Their Role in Building a Civil Society*: Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, 1994; and Mustafa Barghouti, “Overview of Palestinian Non-Government Organizations and Their Future Role,” UPMRC, n.d.

¹⁴ See the information on the occupation in Annex D. The impact of these developments is all the more striking when Tamkeen’s *First Quarterly Progress Report* of April 15, 2003, is compared with the *Second Quarterly Progress Report* of a mere three months later. The latter refers explicitly to the enormous obstacles CSOs face in their work because of restrictions on travel, escalating hardships among Palestinian communities following Israeli incursions (particularly in Gaza), and the

Tamkeen grantees have responded to the situation by combining service delivery with initiatives to increase citizen awareness and promote democracy and governance throughout the PA (SO 3 and IR 3.1 and subsets). They insist that the groundwork for a democratic society characterized by good governance and respect for the rule of law must be laid now, to be built on at a later stage when all are free to exercise their rights.

2. CSOs in Development and Democratic Governance — Review of the Literature

This section briefly reviews theoretical approaches, assumptions, and debates related to the role of CSOs in development, peacekeeping, security, democracy and governance, and the rule of law and discusses their relevance to the role of Palestinian CSOs. Case studies and guides to further information may be found in Annex E.

2.1. The Role of CSOs as Seen in the General Literature

CSOs have variously been defined as the “third sector” existing alongside or between government and the private sector; as the plurality of actors and trends existing in a public sphere; as organic expressions and actors in popular social or political movements; and as primary agents in a neoliberal program for advancing “democracy and the rule of law” in a given society.

CSOs may include NGOs, labor unions, media outlets, and formal and informal citizen activities for particular purposes. Their main purpose is to articulate and advance citizen concerns, provide checks and balances to government authority, empower citizens to social participation and action, and meet related needs. CSOs are often engaged with human rights issues, policy analyses, and lobbying and advocacy. The notion of CSOs existing to provide services in designated sectors while at the same time incorporating democracy and governance-building activities is neither novel nor unprecedented. Examples can be found in many parts of the world, both developed and developing.¹⁵

While not unique as a model for enhancing democracy and governance, the Palestinian situation is nevertheless distinct in that both its CSOs – service delivery or otherwise – and its partially functioning national authority remain subsumed under the overriding control of an occupation regime. Some of the implications of this are analyzed in Sections 5 and 6 below.

2.2. The Role of CSOs in the Changing International Arena

Theoretical approaches to CSOs evolve in response to changing international and regional conditions. These transformations have led governments and international donors to pay more attention to both the policy and the practical implications of supporting CSOs that can deliver

fragmentation and isolation of Palestinian communities due to closure, curfew, and especially the construction of the “separation wall.”

¹⁵ A casual glance at any directory of organizations in any community in the United States, for example, shows an impressive array of such organizations. Among them, organizations offering services to victims of domestic violence also advocate for laws, such as restraining orders, to protect such women and empower women victims to take control of their lives. Similarly, organizations serving disadvantaged youth, adoptive parents, the disabled, women, minorities, and the elderly often combine delivery of essential services with advocacy or other efforts to empower specific communities and to voice their concerns. Elsewhere, throughout the Cold War and until the collapse of the former Soviet Union, local community organizations played prominent roles in national liberation movements and in struggles against dictatorial rule. The lines were often blurred between some type of service delivery and attention to popular empowerment and mobilization for social and political purposes.

desired results. Policymakers may consult academic approaches to the role of CSOs in development and democracy and governance enhancement before incorporating policy and programmatic priorities into their foreign aid and other allocations. The evolution in approaches to CSOs can be summarized as follows:

CSOs and development. The underlying assumption is that CSOs should be strengthened to play a larger role in promoting “sustainable development,” particularly in weak or failing states. The understanding is that:

- Structural adjustment policies favored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have led to more impoverishment, and CSOs need to assume a role in ameliorating the effects of these policies. NGOs in the developing world are asked to make up for inadequate government services in such sectors as education, health, women’s issues, youth concerns, agricultural activities, and other vital economic and social areas. The expansion and funding of popular CSO programs such as income-generating activities responds to this understanding.
- Failed or weak states are not to be entrusted with development programs, so these become the purview of CSOs. World Bank programs, for example, are designed explicitly to support development of the civil society.

CSOs and postconflict situations. The underlying assumption is that providing a space for CSOs to flourish is integral to security, peacekeeping, and building a postconflict culture of peace. This approach flows from the first: CSOs are to do more than deliver services to needy populations, they must play a proactive role in shaping a (new) society and polity. This approach takes various forms, many of which are still evolving.¹⁶

CSOs, democracy building, and promotion of good governance and the rule of law. This approach is often indistinguishable from the postconflict approach. It is cited separately to underscore the view that encouraging CSO development is not limited to postconflict situations but is also crucial wherever conflicts remain unresolved. There is a whole cottage industry of institutions, research centers, NGOs, and other organizations devoted to this work. In sum, there is increased recognition that development, democratic government, stability, and the rule of law very much depend on guaranteeing CSOs a secure environment in which to form and flourish.¹⁷

It is clear, then, that there is invigorated attention to the role of CSOs as the repository of expectations about the future character of a given society. This coincides with the exponential increase in funding to CSOs by international donor agencies and governments for the express purpose of realizing specified sociopolitical and economic goals. Attention is being paid not

¹⁶ One popular trend is the emerging CSO role in promoting “transitional justice” in post-conflict societies; see, e.g., the International Center for Transitional Justice, at www.ictj.org. Another popular trend encourages the emergence of CSOs to instill a new civic identity in newly formed states (see discussion below and, e.g., the Institute for Sustainable Communities, at www.iscvt.org). See also Annex E.

¹⁷ This approach was prompted in part by the challenges to stability and development that followed the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the proliferation of small newly independent states. The United Nations, various governments, and prominent international agencies began to articulate “millennium development goals” that invested CSOs with a key role. An enabling environment in which CSOs can flourish has become one of the central tenets of good governance. If until recently traditional development agencies had not particularly concerned themselves with governance, the emergence or persistence of what were seen as “failed” or “unstable” states – such as Somalia, Afghanistan, and others – whatever the root causes of their problems has attracted attention to governance issues in the context of development. See International Peace Academy, *Strengthening the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Peace and Development in the 21st Century*, www.iapacademy.org.

only to support of democracy and governance elements but also to assessing the impact of CSOs that integrate service delivery into their programs or, in this case, democracy and governance into their service delivery.

2.3. Relevance to the Palestinian Setting

The many publications disseminated by international donors, government backers, and CSO recipients themselves praise and support the important impact of CSO activities in the areas we have discussed; analysts in the intellectual and academic community are similarly supportive. Nevertheless criticisms and concerns can be found. These raise important questions about the assumptions and goals of CSO development programs. While the subject as a whole is too broad to be tackled here, listing some of these concerns helps to locate the contextual challenges facing any program to strengthen civil society in Palestine, including Tamkeen's:¹⁸

- “Civil society” is not necessarily synonymous with democratization in a Western sense; it may reflect a plurality of agendas and interests in the public sphere. There are both positive and negative views, for instance, about the existence of Islamist organizations of “civil society.”
- The emphasis on the democracy and governance functions of CSOs may supplant popular movements struggling for radical transformation or change in a particular setting by siphoning off energy, funding, and other resources. Here analysts point to the change from movement to advocacy common among CSOs.
- A total shift by service delivery organizations to democracy and governance activities may also prove counterproductive, as when religious groups move to fill the breach.¹⁹
- CSOs may become too dependent on international funding and hence beholden to Western agendas and definitions of forms and venues for the exercise of democratic rights and responsibilities. For example, though CSOs increasingly emphasize “reform” and democracy within the PA, this may not reflect or resolve underlying issues like the Israeli occupation.
- Placing so many responsibilities for development and services in the hands of CSOs may marginalize (and delegitimize) state institutions, keep the state weak, and create adversarial rather than cooperative relationships between state and society. Similarly, concentrating economic resources and responsibilities in the hands of CSOs may weaken the ability of the private sector to play a lead role in development.

¹⁸ Comparable USAID programs elsewhere in the world are guided by an assumption (often unstated) that D&G building as well as overall sustainable development presume some degree of national sovereignty, whether it is a new, postcolonial, or postconflict government. Little or no mention is made about how development emerges, let alone is sustained, to realize desired goals in the absence, as in Palestine, of national sovereignty.

¹⁹ According to a representative of a prominent non-Tamkeen service SD organization, while with women's organizations Palestinian NGOs had formerly supported almost 100 percent of services to children, their shift to such activities as women's empowerment or skills training left the field open to Islamist groups to take over education of children. Secular CSO representatives insist they must reclaim their role in youth education so as to instill democratic awareness and values among the emerging younger generation of Palestinians. Similar comments about disturbing religious orientations among youth were also reported by the Tamkeen grantees Alpha and IPYL. Some of these issues are elaborated in Section 4 below.

- Investment in CSOs to take the brunt of society's problems is doomed to fail unless government and the private sector work alongside them as strong, independent, self-sustaining, and viable units of society.

Entrusted with such critical responsibilities, how has Tamkeen through its grants helped enhance the position and participation of Palestinian CSOs in the public discourse? Are service delivery organizations a necessary and viable vehicle for promoting democracy and governance? What are specific indicators of these (generally and specifically) with reference to SO 3 and IR 3.1 and its subsets?

3. Methodology

This section lists the main research questions guiding this study and the measures used to assess the impact of service delivery grants with a democracy and governance component in increasing the participation of Palestinian CSOs in the public discourse. A list of the main sources of information, the rationale for selecting CSO and other visits, notes on the strengths and weaknesses of this methodology as it pertains to this study, and a list of interviews conducted can be found in Annexes B and C. Annex A contains the interview questions.

3.1. Research Questions and Measurable Indicators

Overlapping in certain respects, the main questions and measurable indicators, all rooted in SO 3 and IR 3.1 and its subsets, are as follows:

1. Is including democracy and governance elements in service delivery grants an effective way to increase the participation of CSOs in the public discourse?

Measurable indicators, including those assessing how well Tamkeen grants realize IR 3.1.1, "increased capacity of CSOs to participate in public discourse," were:

- CSO understanding and definition of the meaning, value, and contribution of democracy and governance
- A CSO's definitions of its role in civil society before and after receiving a Tamkeen grant (changes in philosophies, mission, etc.)
- How well the Tamkeen grant increased the capacity of the CSO to carry out designated projects (training, skill-building, etc.)
- The impact of the Tamkeen grant on implementing projects that integrate service delivery with a democracy and governance component
- How much the Tamkeen grant helped expand the range of CSO services to larger or more diversified target groups
- Whether the Tamkeen grant did or did not promote participation of beneficiaries or other constituents in project design or implementation
- Whether the Tamkeen grant facilitated collaboration or at least networking with other organizations
- Whether the Tamkeen grant improved the capacity of the CSO to solicit other sources of funding
- How well the Tamkeen grant promoted the role of smaller CSOs, those in rural areas, and those in the Gaza Strip.

2. Is this grant-making strategy more or less effective than traditional democracy and governance grants – both in general and with respect to reaching specific groups (for example, women, youth, the disabled, and rural populations)?

Many of the measures for this question overlap with those for the previous one; others measure the comparative impact of Tamkeen grants in realizing IR 3.1.2, “CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues,” and IR 3.1.3. “CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues”:

- How well democracy and governance and service delivery CSO activities targeted specific groups, especially women, youth, marginalized communities, and the disabled
- The extent to which projects produced changes to knowledge, attitudes, and practices among target groups (including democratic values and practices, civic awareness, information about rights and responsibilities, and elements of good governance)
- Whether projects changed or increased contact of CSOs, target groups, and other stakeholders with PA ministries, the PLC, and local government officials
- Whether projects increased advocacy or promoted pressure groups for policy or other change (campaigns, petitions, etc.)
- Whether projects increasing dissemination of information and expanded the sectors of people reached (through use of media, publications, etc.)
- The impact of specific types of projects, such as town hall meetings, youth camps, and civil education sessions.

3. Does encouraging service delivery CSOs to include democracy and civil society elements in their programs affect programs other than those funded by Tamkeen?

The extent to which indicators of democracy and governance activities were incorporated into other activities of the CSO (new target groups in other programs, education or training on relevant issues, specific campaigns or advocacy relevant to that sector, use of communication, etc.)

4. Findings and Results

Tamkeen grants to Palestinian service delivery organizations integrating a democracy and governance component have precedents around the world. Successful programs in other countries, including those supported by USAID, demonstrate that CSOs are most effective when they address the daily concerns of the population around them. Service delivery organizations that invite input from their beneficiaries and integrate some combination of knowledge, values, and skills into their programs are often the most effective, particularly when they integrate participant action directly into ongoing activities.²⁰

²⁰ One of the key findings in Sara Roy’s evaluation of USAID CSO funding is that “Political programs must be combined with service, otherwise they will be meaningless to the majority of people at the grassroots who are unemployed and impoverished” (supra, note 2, at page 112).

4.1. Preliminary Remarks

Unlike other countries emerging from colonial or conflict situations or otherwise proceeding along the path toward democracy and good governance, the Occupied Palestinian Territories have a long tradition of a vibrant civil society dating from well before the installation of the PA. The Tamkeen project is thus in many ways building on an established precedent of Palestinian CSOs whose missions, programs, and goals already extend far beyond regular service delivery.

All CSOs underscored the fact that democratization and good governance is a long-term process. Tamkeen grantees in service delivery and democracy and governance, as well as other CSOs, recognized that democracy-building and laying the foundations for good governance is a cumulative long-term process that must be begun immediately if it is to bear fruit later. The representative of one service delivery organization operating in the Gaza Strip warned, “Ten years after Oslo, there is no time to lose.” In the words of the representative of a leading democracy and governance CSO in the West Bank, “We can’t freeze everything because there is an emergency. It is important for the Palestinian people to have pride. We don’t want a state without pride.”

Outcomes, Results, and Impact

Even under the best of circumstances it would be difficult to determine exactly which programmatic or project variables produced which results and to what extent outcomes and changes are lasting. A leading survey specialist at a Palestinian CSO cautioned that while causal relationships between physical phenomena can be measured with about 80 percent accuracy, once social variables are incorporated, accuracy drops to about 20 percent. This is clearly a consideration for this study, given the democracy and governance issues being examined.

The relative brevity of the Tamkeen project to date also makes it difficult to make claims about the enduring impact of grants – which, as many grantees have pointed out, may not be visible for several years. It is especially difficult to talk about the distinct impact of Tamkeen grants on policy issues; at best, one might refer to the Tamkeen “contribution” to policy change.

Quantitative Indicators and Data

Documents available do provide quantitative data on successful implementation of Tamkeen-funded CSO projects in both the democracy and governance and the service delivery sectors. From submission of initial proposals to progress reports, CSOs routinely list both numerical indicators of success (numbers, frequency, percentages) and planned activities, such as workshops, training sessions, town hall meetings, and youth camps; they list the number of beneficiaries and the frequency of such activities. Once the project is completed, they report the results in similar terms.

Tamkeen relies on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of assessing impact. This study is one element of the former method. To quantitatively assess impact, Tamkeen is implementing a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), which is divided into sections

corresponding to the sub-IRs.²¹ Once tabulated, the results should provide important raw data for assessing the reach, if not the impact, of the grants program in realizing the sub-IRs.²²

Lack of Integrated Impact Assessment Mechanisms

The absence of built-in continuous assessment mechanisms at the CSOs makes it difficult to arrive at definitive conclusions about the impact of Tamkeen grants. This applies especially to changes in attitudes and perceptions, which are much more difficult to measure than knowledge.

Some Tamkeen grantees administer questionnaires or conduct surveys to measure the before/after outcomes of a particular project; examples are Wattan's youth civic education sessions, Alpha's baseline survey of awareness of civic issues among high school students, the Civic Forum Institute's performance evaluation, and similar evaluations at PANORAMA. Ashtar claims that a questionnaire administered to track the impact of its plays found that people still remembered what they had seen three years later. Such questionnaires may indicate a process and measure immediate results but do not necessarily establish a clear impact.

Funding Priorities of Other Donors

Though not part of the original considerations for this study, discussions with CSOs and select funders revealed a few interesting themes. Two are of special interest.

The first concerns donor approaches to collaboration and integration of democracy and governance activities. Some CSO representatives praised the Tamkeen grants for making possible collaboration with other organizations ("networking" is perhaps a more accurate description). Others claimed that Tamkeen discourages direct collaboration in projects, most likely because of technical considerations related to project administration. Donors likewise seemed to give mixed messages on this point. Collaboration and networking between CSOs is elaborated on in Section 5.3.

From Tamkeen's perspective, integration of democracy and governance activities into the other projects of an organization, particularly those of service delivery CSOs, is highly desirable. One of Tamkeen's "success stories" otherwise, the YMCA Vocational Training

²¹ See Tamkeen, Grants Vital Statistics Form, administered to Tamkeen grantees to collect data for the PMP. The questions to assess IR 3.1.1, "increased capacity of CSOs to participate in public discourse," include, for example: How many grant draft applications were submitted for this grant? Does the grant involve any training activity? Did the number of constituents served by the CSO increase as a result of implementation of the grant? By what percentage? The questions to assess IR 3.1.2, "CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues," include: Did the grant involve the use of mechanisms to solicit constituent opinion? If yes, how many people were reached through these mechanisms? Did the CSO address a public issue on behalf of its constituents with a view toward changing governmental policy and/or action of government? If yes, did the CSO actions result in a change in governmental policy and/or the actions of government (at any level)? Questions to assess sub-IR 3.1.3, "CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues," include: Does the grant involve information dissemination activities? If yes, record the frequency of each mechanism, number of hours, number of people reached (structured forums: in seminars, symposia, workshops, panel discussions interviews, focus groups; public forums: town hall and other meetings); publications (various types listed); drama etc. Did the CSO use radio to disseminate information? If yes, how much airtime was used? Did the CSO use television to disseminate information? If yes, how much airtime was used?

²² Disaggregating and comparing statistical data for each regular D&G and SD Tamkeen grantee could provide comparisons between the types of CSOs in terms of numbers of people reached and of activities, frequency of dissemination activities, number of direct beneficiaries, indications of policy impact, and so on. This might suggest areas for further exploration by each CSO, whatever the type, and inform programmatic directions. It would also help to more specifically tailor questions in any future impact assessment.

Center in Jericho, has reported a rather unusual experience with this. YMCA staff maintain that they were unable to integrate democracy and governance activities into their other vocational training sessions because the main YMCA donor (not Tamkeen) had yet to see a track record establishing the benefit of such programming and had strict specifications about allocation of time and funds for trainings.

Secondly, with regard to priorities for funding Palestinian CSO democracy and governance activities, Tamkeen's program is firmly rooted in USAID's strategic objective of "more responsive and accountable governance" (SO3) and strengthening the ability of CSOs to participate in the public discourse. In contrast, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) directs its funding priorities to service delivery and other support for long-term sustainable development – which it considers the foundation for democracy and good governance.

This does not simply reflect a philosophical difference over which comes first, the cart or the horse. It reflects certain assumptions about the roots of the problem and hence its solutions. To the extent that USAID's approach — especially under Tamkeen — remains committed to addressing pressing socioeconomic needs while preserving its original mission in the OPTs, it essentially skirts the issue of occupation. Intentionally or not, USAID identifies problems largely in terms of the PA, and solutions, at least in part, in terms of the PA's democratization and good governance under continued occupation.

USAID Funding and the Anti-Terrorism Certificate

USAID funding to Palestinian CSOs has reached unprecedented levels in recent years. Several Tamkeen grantees report that most if not all their funding now comes through USAID. For instance, in 1995 the ATF refused to accept any USAID funding; now it reportedly receives all its funding from USAID through Tamkeen.²³

The implications of a Palestinian civil society dependent almost entirely on USAID funds are quite significant. People interviewed for this study express concern that Palestinian CSOs will become more donor-driven and thus even more closely identified with U.S. policies in the region, which the majority of Palestinians perceive as unfairly pro-Israel. Representatives of a variety of CSOs complain that Palestinian CSOs are accountable to USAID objectives in their projects, including the democracy and governance focus, to the point of neglecting the realities of Israeli occupation.

Both democracy and governance and service delivery organizations are vulnerable in this regard: With few exceptions, service delivery organizations depend heavily on USAID funding (through Tamkeen and other programs) for implementing projects with a democracy and governance component. Regular democracy and governance organizations are also increasingly dependent on different forms of USAID funds for the bulk of their work.

Underscoring the perils of increased CSO dependence on USAID funding is the Anti-Terrorism Certificate. Almost to a person, Tamkeen grantee or not, people interviewed for this study voiced grave concerns on this matter. Tamkeen has communicated its own warnings about the amount of opposition to this certificate. Should Palestinian CSOs refuse to sign (as PNGO has done), they will be ineligible for USAID funding. Many CSOs will

²³ Conversation with USAID representative.

simply fold or collapse. Others will trim or cancel projects and services. CSOs that do sign on risk losing credibility among their target groups, beneficiaries, and wider constituencies.

The certificate will severely test Tamkeen's ability to maintain a strong program. Either way, and unless other funding is secured, Palestinian civil society will be weakened and the exact opposite to what the Tamkeen project was initially designed for will be achieved.

Several Tamkeen grantees have come to the painful conclusion that they must forego Tamkeen grants altogether because of their opposition to the Anti-Terrorism Certificate. Many CSOs will be left with nowhere else to turn for the funds they require.²⁴ As the director of a prominent democracy and governance organization put it, "USAID is disempowering civil society. This will undermine the position of CSOs and will empower the Palestinian Authority instead."

CSO Perceptions of Tamkeen

Given some rather critical views of Palestinian CSOs toward USAID, it is important to distinguish these views from the reputation of Tamkeen itself in the Palestinian CSO community.²⁵

Tamkeen is generally held in high regard. Its team members — from the chief of party (COP) to civil society specialists (CSSs) to administrative staff and others — are praised for being responsive and helpful in addressing CSO concerns in writing proposals, in support for capacity or technical training, and in their general commitment to the CSOs and their projects. Unlike other USAID projects, Tamkeen is seen as having an organic relationship to the society; it is viewed as a Palestinian outfit committed to Palestinian well-being and development.

Tamkeen's focus on democracy and governance, which could elicit suspicion or mistrust if emanating from any other USAID funding source, is more readily accepted and integrated into CSO projects. Tamkeen, I was told, is perceived as a model of how to do business as a CSO, a model of transparency and accountability, a model of commitment to Palestinians, and an answer to the hope of many that donors do more than arrive with an agenda but are truly committed to dealing with the causes and issues that Palestinians confront.

CSOs are aware that Tamkeen is a five-year program and may not be renewed after that date. This time limit is a contractual obligation imposed by the U.S. government and is not the responsibility of Tamkeen. Nevertheless, until the recent flak over the Anti-Terrorism Certificate, Palestinian CSOs had been counting on Tamkeen to stay with them for the long haul. Their thinking is that if Tamkeen is truly committed to strengthening Palestinian civil society so as to achieve democracy and good governance, that cannot be realized in a year or two or even five years – and certainly not while Palestinians are scrambling to respond to an unpredictable political situation, daily humanitarian crises, and deteriorating living conditions for all.

²⁴ Several civil society specialists raise similar concerns. One warned that Tamkeen's work will be seriously limited when only a few organizations are willing to sign on to the new terms – and these will likely suffer credibility problems in their own communities as a result.

²⁵ A few representatives of Tamkeen grantees were careful to praise staff at the USAID mission for their experience and knowledge of the area. They contrast this to policies made in Washington, over which USAID staff in the field have little control.

4.2. Comparisons of Impact of D&G Grants and SD Grants With a D&G Component

Initial results from this assessment relating to the role of service delivery CSOs in promoting democracy and governance and realizing USAID objectives are encouraging. The question is not whether service delivery CSOs are effective in *theory* as vehicles of democratization and good governance, but rather whether they are effective in *practice* in the OPTs. A number of variables, both internal and external to the CSOs, contribute to the success of these initiatives. The total picture is of a promising work in progress.

The Context of Occupation

Even before the start of the Second Intifada in September 2000, areas under PA control never exceeded a fragmented 40 percent of the West Bank (a combination of Areas A and B) and 60 to 80 percent of Gaza Strip (sources differ as to precise amounts). Deprived of jurisdiction over all the Palestinian territories, the PA could not adequately develop, let alone implement, national plans in critical sectors like health, education, agriculture, water resources, and the environment. This affected the work of CSOs, which after the installation of the PA often found themselves responsible for “development” work and since the Second Intifada for emergency and humanitarian services as well.²⁶

Service delivery CSOs are highly sought out in their communities by increasingly destitute populations. These CSOs are well placed to reach wide sectors of the population should they integrate democracy and governance activities into the essential services they already provide. On the other hand, service delivery CSOs may simply be overwhelmed with the myriad competing demands upon them. They may lack resources, staff, training, and other requisites to take on new initiatives. Even where they do undertake such projects, the increasingly harsh and unpredictable conditions of occupation bring into question their long-term viability. This is especially the case with financially strapped or smaller CSOs and those that have little experience with democracy and governance activities.

Democracy and governance organizations in the OPTs similarly function under the constraints of occupation, but because they are not burdened with providing vital services to destitute populations and because they enjoy longer experience with democracy and governance-related activities, they may not be as vulnerable as some service delivery CSOs.

These organizations do, however, face their own challenges. The most common remark heard in this regard was that people want more than “talk.” Many people also perceive democracy and governance organizations as elitist, catering more to the NGO world and the donor community than to the needs and realities of their Palestinian constituents. Perhaps this is why some democracy and governance organizations have begun to venture into service areas, to some extent blurring the lines between service delivery and democracy and governance organizations. PANORAMA’s Tamkeen-funded project for the hearing-impaired is one example.

²⁶ For a comprehensive review of conditions under occupation, see Sara Roy, *supra* note 2. For data on service sectors under occupation, see also Annex D.

Definitions and Understandings of Critical Terms

This study uncovered among stakeholders a broad range of definitions and fluid understandings of such terms as “service,” “service delivery,” “service sector,” “democracy,” “governance,” and “civil society.”²⁷

Service delivery, according to some Tamkeen CSSs, CSO representatives, and others, comprises such activities as civic education sessions at a boy’s club and setting up workshops on women’s rights – activities that are distinct from the more common understanding of service delivery, as in mother and child health programs, and waste-water and environmental management sessions with farmers.

There may be several reasons for variations in the use of terms. Some CSSs have ventured that it reflects a genuine Tamkeen attempt at inclusion – to invite a diverse range of Palestinians CSOs to benefit directly from Tamkeen grants and thus enhance their position as civil society interlocutors in the Palestinian arena. Others have pointed out that the definitions themselves are in flux and may reflect (a) shifting Tamkeen priorities or (b) Tamkeen’s interest in capitalizing on project strengths and containing project weaknesses in order to maintain the original rationale of the program. In terms of shifting Tamkeen priorities, some saw renewed interest in awarding grants mainly in the traditional democracy and governance sector.

CSO Self-Definition

When applications to Tamkeen are assessed, they are categorized either as “democracy and governance” or “service delivery with a democracy and governance component.” However, the self-definition of CSOs is much more nuanced. Tamkeen grantees define themselves as regular democracy and governance organizations (the Arab Thought Forum), democracy and governance organizations with some element of “service delivery” (PANORAMA), service delivery organizations integrating democracy and governance activities (Tamkeen’s service delivery grantees), cooperatives (Cooperative Development Unit – The Agricultural Cooperative Union), research organizations (the Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem), capacity-building organizations (Bisan), organizations focused on sustainable development, and charitable organizations (the Kalandia Women’s Handicraft Cooperative). There are two main reasons why these distinctions are relevant to this study:

- There is a correlation, though not always precise, between a CSO’s self-definition and the groups benefiting from its projects (other NGOs, professionals, youth, marginalized groups, etc.).²⁸
- There is a correlation between the type of CSO and the nature of its relationships with the PA and its institutions. This by extension affects how the organization perceives its role in civil society and in influencing the democratization and governance process.²⁹

²⁷ I realized rather belatedly that some Tamkeen grantees seem to hold such distinctly separate understandings of “democracy” and “governance” that CSO projects may promote “democracy” (as in offering civic education sessions for youth), without directly addressing “governance” (as in reform within PA institutions). It may be worthwhile for Tamkeen to investigate this further to inform future programming.

²⁸ SD organizations also tend to identify “community development” as their main priority.

²⁹ Specific examples illustrating these two points are provided in Section 5.3.

Strength and Sustainability

Both service delivery and regular democracy and governance organizations, as already noted, are increasingly dependent on donor funding. Many service delivery organizations report that they would not have integrated democracy and governance activities into their services were it not for Tamkeen support. Many of them admitted that for the most part they could not seriously think of integrating more of these activities into their other projects at this time.

Although with or without a Tamkeen grant democracy and governance organizations would continue to adhere to their mission, by definition rooted in promoting democracy and governance, the funding they receive from Tamkeen has enabled them to expand the reach of their activities and explore creative ways to do their work. Several democracy and governance CSOs report that these new activities would most likely cease without Tamkeen support.

Some organizations have attempted to mitigate their over-reliance on donor funds by diversifying their sources of funding, involving volunteers in their work, and where possible designing income-generating activities. In many notable cases, the volunteers are former beneficiaries of Tamkeen-funded projects, as at the International Palestinian Youth League and the Culture and Free Thought Association.³⁰

If by their own admission Palestinian CSO democracy and governance projects, and indeed the very sustainability of the grantees, is conditional on Tamkeen funds, at a very fundamental level Tamkeen's program may unwittingly be defeating the very goal for which it was set up: to strengthen the role of Palestinian CSOs in the public discourse.

Palestinian CSOs seem to be locked into a vicious cycle. Their strength as effective players in civil society and in promoting democracy and governance depends on their sustainability, while the sustainability of some depends largely on Tamkeen funding. In effect, some will not remain strong CSOs without seeking other funding sources.³¹

Type of Grant vs. Critical Population Sectors: Investing in Youth

Consistent with Tamkeen identification of youth as a strategic sector for both democracy and governance and service delivery programming, there appears to be a strong consensus that investing in youth is key to building a more democratic society. Indeed, the most pronounced finding in this study is that it is not so much the type of grant (D&G plus SD or pure D&G), nor the type of organization (SD or D&G CSO) that determines effectiveness and impact. Rather, the most significant variable appears to be the sector of beneficiaries: youth and children.³²

³⁰ A CFTA staff member said that about 20 young people who had taken their youth leadership and civic education trainings are now working as volunteers at the association.

³¹ Tamkeen senior staff emphasize their continuing commitment to capacity-building and institutional development, especially for smaller CSOs and those in the Gaza Strip, precisely to strengthen them as more effective and self-sufficient players on the civil society scene, but restrictions on freedom of movement prevented Tamkeen from proceeding along these lines. They hope to resume these efforts soon.

³² Many interviewees expressed the opinion that changing adult attitudes is hopeless. It is no accident that a significant number of Tamkeen grantees, SD and D&G alike, target their activities toward youth. Specific examples of such projects are provided in Section 5.3.

4.3. Specific Findings³³

Guided by the research questions outlined in Section 4.1, this section assesses how effective Tamkeen service delivery grants are, compared to regular democracy and governance grants, in realizing IR 3.1, “increased participation of CSOs in the public discourse,” and thus SO 3, “more responsive and accountable governance.” While some of the information necessarily overlaps, specific results of the study are categorized under the sub-set IRs. Table 2 summarizes the general impact of Tamkeen grants in realizing sub-IRs.

Table 2
Indicators of Impact of Tamkeen Grants

USAID Intermediate Result 3.1 Increased Participation of CSOs in the Public Discourse		
IR 3.1.1 <i>Increased capacity of CSOs to participate in public discourse</i>	IR 3.1.2 <i>CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues</i>	IR 3.1.3 <i>CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues</i>
Demonstrable contribution to capacity and projects Enhanced ability to consult with constituents and beneficiaries; expanded outreach to marginalized groups Enhanced collaboration and networking Impact on the internal philosophy and mission of the organization Impact on smaller CSOs, especially in the Gaza Strip	Promising impact on youth as a target sector Effective programs (civic education, etc.) Participation built directly into projects Increased involvement of other stakeholders Evidence of integration of D&G into other projects Increased contacts between CSOs and government officials Impact on laws and policies, especially local	Filling a niche – importance of SD organizations Increased number of publications and use of media and communications

4.3.1 Increased Capacity of CSOs to Participate in Public Discourse

CSOs were asked to assess their work before and after receiving the Tamkeen grant. Those who received renewals or second grants were asked what they learned from the first project and how they integrated best practices into the new project. They were also asked if democracy and governance activities were integrated into their other projects as a result of the Tamkeen grant.

There is evidence that Tamkeen had contributed to increasing the capacity of CSOs — with some variation, both service delivery and democracy and governance organizations — to participate in the public discourse. The main findings are these:

³³ Unless otherwise noted, the findings documented below refer to accomplishments of Tamkeen CSO grantees interviewed. The results can be generalized to the remaining Tamkeen grantees in both the D&G and SD sectors.

Demonstrable Contribution to Capacity and Projects

Tamkeen grants have made a distinct contribution to increasing the capacity of CSOs by allowing them to increase the expertise of staff, hire new staff, and build institutional capabilities. Service delivery CSOs are most likely to report that the grant helped them expand the range of services they were able to provide, reach different groups, or implement totally new types of projects, such as advocacy.

Tamkeen CSS staff noted the contribution of “best practices” training to capacity-building, especially among service delivery and smaller CSOs and those in the Gaza Strip, where access to donors is more limited than in the West Bank. Even established CSOs like **ATF** and **Wattan** acknowledged that the Tamkeen grants taught them to do better strategic planning, pay more attention to links between project design and implementation, and create more accurate reporting and accounting procedures.

Several CSOs pointed to their enhanced ability to solicit other sources of funding – partly a result of the proposal-writing procedures learned with Tamkeen and partly because obtaining a Tamkeen grant lent them credibility in the eyes of other donors. **Al-Lod**, for example, used its enhanced proposal-writing skills and its Tamkeen connection to solicit funds from MARAM and other donors.

The Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) in Khan Younis credits the Tamkeen grant with enabling it to expand activities to marginalized communities it could not reach before. CFTA was established by a group of local women in 1991. It aims to “contribute to the building of a democratic civil society through development of local capacities in the cultural, educational, social, and health sectors of the community.” With the help of a Tamkeen grant, in 2001 CFTA set up a project on Leadership Training and Civic Education for Youth. A Youth Parliament was created to teach youth about their rights and responsibilities. Beneficiaries of this program went on to set up leadership training camps and similar activities in their schools and local communities.

Care for Children with Special Needs Society (CCSNS) in Nablus repeatedly emphasized the contribution of the Tamkeen grant to its work. CCSNS was established in 1994 to care for children with communication disabilities. Director Sarab Malhas compared the earlier work of the society, which consisted mainly of therapy, with its newfound credibility and expertise since receiving Tamkeen funding.³⁴ In 2001, CCSNS started a project on Early Detection of Communicative Disorders in Kindergarten and Second Grade School Children.

The Tamkeen grant was renewed in 2002. The Communicative Disorder Protection Campaign built on the achievements of the first grant to launch a campaign to increase awareness of the importance of early detection of communicative disorders and promote greater acceptance of disabled children. CCSNS gained the attention of the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs and also gained acceptance and respect for its activities. CCSNS staff mentioned the increased awareness of the rights of children with disabilities and the growing receptiveness of parents and schools to their work.

Kalandia Camp Women’s Handicraft Cooperative in the West Bank refers to its Tamkeen project as a “complete idea.” Tamkeen’s support ranges from technical assistance to project

³⁴ Malhas is one of only two women who are members of the Nablus Municipal Council. This gives her another platform for raising disability issues.

design to assistance in outreach and locating other resources. The cooperative was established around 1958 to offer vocational training and other services to local refugee women. With the help of a Tamkeen grant, the cooperative embarked in 2002 on a project on Empowerment of 40 Palestinian Women from the West Bank Central Area through Skills. It integrated civic education with skills training in industrial knitting. Beneficiaries have since established their own village-based committees to instill civic education concepts and promote women's rights.

The International Palestinian Youth League (IPYL) in Hebron was established in 1997 “to provide young Palestinians with the necessary skills to strengthen Palestinian civil society and to encourage them to play an active role in their communities.” Its first Tamkeen-funded project in 2001 was a Democracy and Citizenship Summer Camp where area young people between 15 and 17 years old participated in activities to enhance citizen awareness and problem-solving skills. A second project built on the successes of the first to include concepts and skills related to democracy and citizenship. IPYL staff made special note of the contribution of the Tamkeen grants to more systematic integration of democracy and governance activities, particularly civic education workshops, into its summer camps and other activities for youth.

Al-Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society in the Al-Maghazi refugee camp in the Gaza Strip was established in 1994 to “promote a sense of security and self-confidence in children, and to meet the needs of the local community, especially people with special needs such as women, youth and children.” Tamkeen-funded projects in 2001 and 2002 to promote community education in the camp had a significant impact on the work of the society. The staff interviewed emphasized their newfound ability to work with children in a more family- and community-oriented way.

The Palestinian Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development (PANORAMA) is an example of an established democracy and governance organization that has introduced an innovative project into its repertoire. Established in 1991 and now with branches in Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Gaza, PANORAMA aims to “sustain community development and assist democratic transformation within Palestinian society.” It has received six project grants from Tamkeen, three of them renewals. The project on Hearing- Impaired Community Inclusion has allowed PANORAMA to add service delivery to its regular democracy and governance activities; hearing-impaired and hearing children are brought together in sign language classes. PANORAMA has organized other activities to inform citizens on the rights of the disabled and to urge public officials and decision makers to implement those rights in schools and community settings.

The Fekra Arts Institute in Gaza offers an innovative approach to promoting citizen awareness on sensitive issues. Fekra was established in 2001 in response to “the absence of artistic educational activities for children and youth in Gaza.” Fekra aims to support “a new generation of youth to be active in and contribute to civil society institutions.” Fekra combines “fun” with learning “because young people don’t like to be preached at.”

With the support of a Tamkeen grant in 2001, Fekra launched a first phase of its Theater Program for Drama Therapy and organized focus groups among young people and their teachers to discuss pressing issues in society. In a second Tamkeen-funded project, Women in Gaza: Expressions Through Theater, Fekra tackled the issue of violence against women and the phenomenon of early marriage. Tamkeen funding has enabled Fekra to reach

thousands of people through its plays, which are performed in dozens of schools and other venues around the Gaza Strip.

Fekra has attracted the attention of the media and public officials. Its most recent play, “Something Going On,” generated considerable stir because of its implied criticism of the PA and because it tackled such sensitive issues as elections and democracy.

The Palestinian Institute for Community Research and Training (WATTAN) in Gaza was established to promote “civic education, leadership, and institutional development in Palestine.” The need for such an organization emerged at a 1999 conference in Gaza, where it was found that “civic concepts in all its aspects needed to be promoted in universities, higher institutions of learning, and educational youth and women’s organizations.” Tamkeen grants in 2001 and in 2002 enabled Wattan to launch a project on Civic Education and Leadership for a group of Al-Azhar University students.

Director Ata Darwish notes that the Tamkeen grants enabled Wattan to take the next logical steps in program development: While the first project offered democracy-related workshops, in the second Wattan could invest in the long-term planning necessary to train youth in advocacy and leadership skills, so that young people could put into practice what they had learned.

Al-Islah Charitable Society in Jericho was established in 1991 to provide “health care and humanitarian aid.” It also offers educational and cultural programs. Reaching about 12,000 to 15,000 people a year, Al-Islah is especially concerned with meeting the health needs of marginalized communities in the area, including the Bedouin. With the support of two Tamkeen grants in 2001 and 2002, Al-Islah was able to integrate “awareness and knowledge” into its service delivery activities for Bedouin women and children. The second integrated project was on Health Care and Civic Education for Bedouin Mothers and Children. The Tamkeen grant, staff members said, enabled Al-Islah to hire a part-time staff person to conduct civic education sessions two to three times a week, to reach more women beneficiaries, and to “strengthen their popular base.”

Enhanced Ability to Consult with Constituents and Beneficiaries

Several CSOs cited their ability, sometimes for the first time, to consult with potential beneficiaries and other constituents on their needs and priorities and to integrate these into project design and implementation.

- **Fekra** has taken advantage of opportunities afforded by the Tamkeen grants to conduct intensive focus groups among youth to elicit ideas for its plays.
- **The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ)** in Bethlehem emphasizes that it has come to appreciate the importance of consulting with local communities on environmental damage in their areas. Its Tamkeen-supported project in 2002 was An Analysis of Waste Management Policies in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip). For this, ARIJ conducted extensive research into environmental issues. ARIJ emphasized its intention to publicize the information and share it with both community and political stakeholders.

- **Al-Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society** reported that it learned the hard way the importance of having the community sign on to its activities. Staff interviewed told of how the resistance they had encountered was dissipated when families were consulted and local leaders were drawn into the work.

Enhanced Collaboration and Networking

Many Tamkeen grantees noted that their enhanced ability to network and sometimes collaborate with other organizations increased their visibility and reach in the community. This was especially pronounced among service delivery organizations and those in the Gaza Strip. Established democracy and governance organizations were less likely to cite collaboration; ATF and ACAD even shrugged off the benefits of collaboration with others. According to both Tamkeen and non-Tamkeen democracy and governance CSOs, competition is stiff and democracy and governance organizations prefer to network with others only when necessary.

Care for Children with Special Needs Society (Nablus) referred to its increased ability to network and collaborate with others as one of the major achievements of the Tamkeen-funded project. CCSNS works to great effect with schools, community-based organizations, and representatives from various government ministries.

The Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children in Gaza reported that the Tamkeen grant allowed it to expand its projects and beneficiaries and increased its ability to collaborate with others working within the society. Atfaluna was established in 1992 “to provide educational, social, vocational training, and rehabilitation services to deaf children.” It is concerned with enhancing self-reliance among the deaf and integrating them into their communities by offering vocational and other skills training. Tamkeen-funded projects have helped Atfaluna implement a Protection of Deaf Girls and Women Project and later expand it into Protection of Deaf Women – A Community Model Project. Atfaluna expects that this model will serve as a demonstration to other organizations working to raise awareness of disability rights and integrate the deaf into their communities. Staff noted, too, the Tamkeen contribution to expanding their outreach in the religious community in Gaza, where they increased awareness of disability issues and even got the blessing of religious figures for marriages between hearing-impaired women and hearing men.

Internal Philosophy and Mission of the Organization

Many CSOs credited Tamkeen-funded projects for fundamental transformations at the personal and organizational levels. Some service delivery CSOs acknowledged that they were not especially interested in democracy and governance activities when they first received Tamkeen funding but changed in the course of their projects. Appreciation for such activities, they reported, seeped into the very philosophical core of their organizations as they began to see changes to peoples’ behavior and attitudes. Democracy and governance organizations were less likely to report such changes, perhaps because they already had long experience working on these issues.

Al-Islah (Jericho) staff admitted that the Tamkeen grant afforded them their first experience with civic education and they are “still on a learning curve.”

The YMCA Vocational Training Center in Jericho had had little opportunity to integrate civic education and democracy-building into its vocational skills training. Economic and social changes over recent years, particularly the need to offer training to women, gave added impetus for the YMCA to introduce concepts and information on citizen rights, particularly on the rights of women. In 2001, Tamkeen funded a project to integrate civic education into vocational training. This project was later renewed, and civic education trainers were added to the YMCA staff

YMCA staff admitted that some vocational skills trainers were initially opposed to this work but later the opposition of most was overcome. These trainers then demanded that they in turn be trained in civic education and that this approach be integrated more closely into vocational training.³⁵ The Tamkeen-funded program offers sessions in both civic education and vocational training skills to a select group of students. The YMCA remains committed to integrating democracy and governance directly into the vocational skills training curriculum, and is planning to establish a Civic Education Department to do so.

Al-Lod Charitable Association in Nablus was established in 1995. A senior staff person there talked about his own personal transformation and the organizational changes at the association over the last few years. He praised Tamkeen's best practices training and said that the Tamkeen grant gave Al-Lod "the confidence to raise its voice." The association "builds civic awareness and addresses issues in community development, health education, training and rehabilitation, psychological and social counseling, and volunteer work." It caters to marginalized groups in Nablus and the northern areas of the West Bank, including women and children.

With the help of a 2001 Tamkeen grant, later renewed, Al-Lod designed and implemented the creative "Guide Mother" Project. Local women in civic education sessions were taught about certain rights and laws, including the rights of children. These women then took their new knowledge and skills to families in their communities. Staff of the association were quite stunned by the transformations in these participants and impressed by their newfound willingness to articulate their opinions. The results gave Al-Lod impetus to expand work in this area.

The Al-Maghazi Society traces to the Tamkeen grant its transformation from a rather hierarchical organization to one that is more democratic and participatory. According to one staff member, they realized that if they wanted to promote leadership and freedom of thought and action among children, they would first have to adopt these values and attitudes themselves.

³⁵ Some trainers remain opposed, and certain vocational training workshops funded by other donors do not incorporate civic education. The interview at the YMCA-Jericho was one of the most difficult of all the interviews. Staff made claims that later statements appeared to contradict. By the end of the discussion it was clear that the YMCA had struggled, and perhaps is still struggling, to achieve Tamkeen project goals. The CSS believes there was a problem of miscommunication. While there is no doubt that the YMCA remains committed to this work, it may be useful to continue to monitor the situation. Though I was taken on a quick tour of vocational training sessions, there was no time to interview beneficiaries or trainers.

Impact on Smaller CSOs, Especially in the Gaza Strip

The impact of the Tamkeen grants on smaller CSOs, CSOs in rural areas, and in the Gaza Strip cannot be overestimated. For instance

- Without the Tamkeen grant **Al-Islah** would have been incapable of assuming a place among CSOs working – even in the most modest way – on democracy and governance issues.
- Thanks to the Tamkeen grant, the **Culture and Thought Forum** was able to reach wider audiences and target groups of youth and children. The results have reverberated in schools and the surrounding community as young people apply lessons learned at CFTA directly to their own family, school, and local settings.

Reported CSO Concerns

CSOs report some concerns about Tamkeen grants. To the extent these pertain to sub-IR 3.1.1, “increasing the capacity of CSOs to participate in the public discourse,” the following points can be noted:

Allocation of Funds

Several people interviewed, including two CSSs, expressed disappointment that Tamkeen grants repeatedly go to the same organizations one cycle after another, especially to larger ones like PANORAMA and ATF. Those who expressed such concerns would prefer that opportunities be given to a more diverse group of CSOs, not only to build their capacity and participate in the public discourse but also to strengthen the CSO sector as a whole, especially service delivery organizations in the Gaza Strip and other remote areas of the West Bank.

As reported earlier, Tamkeen’s senior staff has a very different explanation, noting that approximately 77 percent of grants in Year 1 and 68 percent of grants in Year 2 went to small- and medium-sized CSOs (those with fewer than 20 employees). They also noted the increased opportunities for smaller CSOs under Tamkeen’s 2003 Work Plan. I was not able to assess the general landscape of non-Tamkeen service delivery CSOs (especially in the Gaza Strip) to give an informed opinion on the matter.

More Institution and Capacity-Building Support

Some Tamkeen grantees and several CSSs expressed concern that Tamkeen had moved away from the type of capacity-building and institutional support that had been available early in the program.³⁶ The representative of one Tamkeen-funded democracy and governance CSO pointed out that donors tend to focus on humanitarian and service activities and are rarely interested in linking these with longer-term development, yet that is precisely what is needed in the Palestinian context, and capacity-building remains vital for that.

³⁶ See Section 5.2. Tamkeen reports that it is resuming such support to smaller CSOs and responding to their needs by inviting them to attach capacity-building proposals to requests for specific projects.

Short Project Timelines

Some concerns were expressed about the limited length of the projects. Even where the timeline was extended from 12 months to 18 months, grantees reported that this is too little time to prepare the groundwork, let alone see the results of projects designed to promote long-term change.³⁷

Factors Internal to Organizations

In some cases, factors internal to the CSO and unrelated to the grant may work to mitigate its impact. Among these are the competing understandings of board members and staff about the purpose of projects as well as the strain on limited resources during the Intifada. Some of these factors apparently affected at least two organizations, the Palestinian Hypertension Association (PHA)-Gaza and Al-Islah-Jericho.

4.3.2. CSOs Effectively Aggregate and Articulate Citizen Issues

Tamkeen grants have had a discernible impact on how well CSOs aggregate and articulate citizen issues; the extent varies by organization but can be found in both service delivery and regular democracy and governance CSOs.

Youth as a Target Sector

The most striking variable determining the impact of Tamkeen-funded projects is the beneficiary population, more so than whether the project is done by a regular democracy and governance or an service delivery CSO with a democracy and governance component. The most effective projects are those targeting youth and children.³⁸ Success may also be more assured in youth-oriented projects for the simple reason, as pointed out by a UNDP representative, that because youth are not usually the breadwinners for their families, they have the luxury of time to attend vocational training or civic education sessions and learn about democracy and similar values and skills. A few examples are cited here.

The International Palestinian Youth League (IPYL) in Hebron operates under challenging circumstances within a traditional and highly religious city culture. The volatile situation is compounded by the presence of Israeli-Jewish settlers and the division of the town into separate areas of Jewish and Palestinian control. IPYL staff worry that young people are often exposed to and steeped in extremist religious values. They feel it is their mission to expose young people to different, democratic, values and practices. Many IPYL activities, including summer camps, international exchange programs, and study tours, give opportunities to young Palestinians to broaden their horizons through encounters with young people from other cultures; IPYL staff talked about the transformation of young people through these encounters: They see how foreign youth express themselves and come back demanding the same rights, for example, in breaking down barriers between young men and young women.

³⁷ According to Tamkeen senior staff, contractual obligations limit the duration of grants. They also noted that the project is committed to renewing successful projects, as shown by the number of grantees enjoying second and even third renewals.

³⁸ Tamkeen has a number of projects related to disability; they are being separately evaluated by consultant Elham Eid-Alldredge.

One high school beneficiary said that everyone in his family now respects the views of his 13-year old sister. She is insisting as well on talking to her classmates about democracy. When asked what he would do with the knowledge and skills he gained at the IPYL another student said, “It isn’t important what I’ll do with it. What is important is that every individual must form their character, must become aware.” Another student chimed in, “All of this will contribute to making us the best nation on earth.”

Al-Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society offered unequivocal evidence of how children are transformed through participation in its activities. Though the society does not use the word “democracy,” the concept is rooted in every practice and activity. Children of various ages participate in activities that give them the tools to *strategically* (as the society emphasizes) approach a problem “from A to Z.” Children identify a list of community problems and divide into groups to find solutions. In a meeting of five young beneficiaries, including two girls, of the Tamkeen-funded project to promote community-based education in the camp, the children talked enthusiastically about what they had achieved. Ranging in age from 11 to 14, they recounted how they had become concerned about the number of traffic accidents at a busy intersection in the camp; they had found that children going to or from school often risked their lives crossing this street.

The group decided to tackle the problem. First they verified the accident rate and assessed the risks. Then they approached families and other community members to learn more about the community’s attitude toward the problem. The solution they devised was that a pedestrian bridge should be constructed across the busy street, so they approached the police chief in the camp. Asked how he felt about talking to a person in authority like the police chief, an 11-year-old boy, Mohammed, replied, “It was easy. The police chief is one of us, no problem.” The children got their bridge.

Bisan Center for Research and Development views a central part of its mission to be working with youth, women, and other marginalized communities. Established in 1989 as a community development organization, Bisan “believes that development must be participatory and bottom-driven if it is to be effective.” The Tamkeen-funded project it launched in 2001 is on Advocacy for a Regional Public Policy on Youth (mainly in the Ramallah region). This project was renewed in 2002 to extend throughout the Nablus area, including remote villages and refugee camps.

In the project young people are instructed in both theoretical and practical advocacy techniques. They are encouraged to design their own campaigns around issues that they identify. One team, calling itself “The Future,” is looking at the financial and other difficulties facing female students from outlying villages. These young women must live on campus because of problems with checkpoints and closures in getting to their classes. The team has decided to set up a small local shop where such students could buy supplies more cheaply.

These young people are also tackling sensitive gender issues, gearing up for media appearances on television and radio, and even planning a press conference. They hope to make decision makers responsive to their needs. They said they are becoming confident and assertive, ready to build a more democratic society around them.

Atfaluna (Gaza), working primarily with women and children, aims to get the community to respect “deaf culture.” Staff do not mention the word “democracy” directly; instead, they

point to results and impact: “It meant the world to them when the deaf could read street signs and write their names. What is democracy if not this – communicating with others and knowing they have the same rights as hearing people?”

Wattan (Gaza) can cite a long list of achievements in civic education training for youth. College students learn the concepts and values of democracy and gain new advocacy skills. Wattan staff noted with pride young students going on to start their own local civic education classes, working or volunteering at other institutions, contributing to the Wattan magazine, or otherwise becoming active in their communities.

Fekra (Gaza) makes a point of involving young people directly in identifying social themes for its plays. It also invites young audience members to debate the issues after each performance. In doing so, it empowers young people and helps them develop the confidence to voice their opinions and to feel better equipped to do something about what concerns them. Fekra staff is proud to point out that after its first play, a group of young students formed a “Friends of Fekra” society. These young people often visit the institute to learn theater skills and to volunteer their time.

Most Effective Program Ideas

D&G Organizations

Greater capacity and resources, as well as longer experience with the issues, are more likely to be found at democracy and governance organizations than at the smaller service delivery CSOs that receive funding from Tamkeen. Democracy and governance organizations are also more effective in aggregating and articulating citizen issues at the broader public level. They are better equipped to conduct activities like large town hall meetings, petition drives, massive advocacy campaigns, and wide-scale teaching training sessions. The following are some examples:

The Arab Thought Forum (ATF) uses town hall meetings as a venue for eliciting citizen complaints about local issues. An ATF representative underscored their value by referring to a case where the mayor of Tulkarm was forced to resign after a series of town hall meetings in which it was revealed that the mayor had not submitted proposals for infrastructure development, as was required. With the help of a Tamkeen grant the ATF also established a Citizen Rights Center to offer legal assistance and connect citizens with their lawmakers.

PANORAMA’s project uses “learning through playing” to raise awareness of the rights of the hearing impaired and integrate them into their communities. A joint petition signed by a group of hearing-impaired and hearing children was presented to a PLC member. In an unprecedented development, hearing children were found advocating on behalf of the hearing-impaired, and families flocked to PANORAMA insisting that their children also be taught sign language.

The Civic Forum Institute (Ramallah) takes seriously its mandate “to empower local leaders and organizations through meaningful and consistent programs and activities organized in local communities throughout Palestine.” CFI helped organize a series of “consultative group meetings” in which Tamkeen grantees met to offer feedback on Tamkeen’s project goals. CFI plays a significant role in capacity-building in the civic education area for community-based organizations (CBOs), especially those in marginalized

areas; it helps to promote their role and define their space in civil society. Tamkeen grants have allowed CFI to support capacity-building for a number of Tamkeen grantees, including YMCA-Jericho, Al-Islah, and the Kalandia Camp Women's Handicraft Cooperative.

The Cooperative Development Unit (CDU) in Ramallah, with the help of a Tamkeen grant, created a project to promote democratic administration within cooperative societies. The CDU maintains that “the essence of a cooperative is democratic practices among its members.”

The Center for Environmental and Occupation Health Sciences (CEOHS) at Birzeit University, which defines itself as a “community development center,” has used its Tamkeen grant to deepen its connections to the community. Traditionally concerned with practical applications of its scientific research on eco-agricultural and industrial concerns, the CEOHS now offers more public awareness campaigns on environmental and nutritional issues via summer camps and other activities. A CEOHS representative explained that one unanticipated consequence of the project's training for high school teachers was the discovery of serious nutritional deficiencies among youth, particularly those 5 years and older (a group rarely targeted in health-related projects). He also reported finding 13- and 14-year-olds who looked more like 9 year-olds; he now hopes to expand activities to this vulnerable age group.

Ashtar for Theatre Productions and Training in the West Bank, like Fekra, puts on plays that engage audiences in timely social issues and encourages discussion, debate, and problem-solving among the audiences.

Service Delivery Organizations

Service delivery organizations are by definition more closely tied than democracy and governance organizations to their grassroots communities because they provide them with essential services. Their activities may also be restricted to beneficiaries who already receive services. Their ability to articulate citizen issues is often circumscribed by their limited organizational capacity and resources. However, the fact that they promote citizen awareness, inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities, and encourage people to participate in public life by addressing community priorities and needs facilitates the acceptance of their democracy and governance activities.

Service delivery organizations also tend to address the needs of marginalized groups, particularly women, who are more likely to participate in democracy and governance activities when these are directly linked to their own priorities. This point was affirmed time and again throughout the study; the outcomes establish the important contribution service delivery CSOs make in articulating citizen concerns.

The Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD) in the Gaza Strip integrates information about rights directly into sessions addressing farmers' use of seeds and pesticides, marketing, land, and related issues. Farmers take the lead in identifying problems; ACAD then weaves in its democracy and rights-building activities. ACAD claims to have created a channel to decision makers through which farmers can convey and advocate for their concerns.

ACAD's Tamkeen-funded project, a Participatory Analysis of National Agricultural Policies, allowed farmers to help identify concerns like lack of adequate credit, impact of fertilizers on the environment, and PA policies that affect them. Farmers discuss their rights, organize follow-up committees, and learn through direct practice the advocacy skills needed to approach the decision-makers.

For **Care for Children with Special Needs Society (CCSNS)** in Nablus, helping children and their parents become aware of disability issues and rights while testing them for communicative disorders is valued all the more because such awareness is directly relevant to them. With the support of the Tamkeen grant, CCSNS was able to establish a computerized database of information on hearing-impaired children and their issues. This database is available on the Web for use by ministries, other CSOs, and concerned individuals and groups.

The Kalandia Camp Women's Handicraft Cooperative has made important strides as a result of Tamkeen funding. Linking "awareness" with other programs was found to be key to its success; a representative said, "Women derive confidence from their participation in the workshops. Women feel empowered to address their own problems and struggle for their rights — even if at an individual level." Many women have been returning to the Kalandia Cooperative to demand new workshops on topics like adolescence, breast cancer, and osteoporosis. The cooperative is about to establish a Civil Education Department to integrate civic education into all Kalandia's programs. This is a direct outcome of the value it ascribes to what it learned from its first Tamkeen-funded project.³⁹

Participation Built into Projects

Democracy and governance approaches succeed better when they are directly tied to constituent and beneficiary needs and concerns *and* when participation is built directly into the project. Inclusion is also crucial for youth-oriented activities. As a **Bisan** staff member said, "No one asks what they think. No one asks them to solve problems." Bisan's project does just that: It asks young people themselves to identify daily problems in their communities and take the lead in advocating solutions.

ACAD understands that it cannot attract farmers to vague "democracy-building" workshops. Farmers attend and participate because "democracy" and "rights" are couched in a language they can relate to, and because they learn through direct action to protect their rights. Farmers have noted how they learned about and advocated for their rights on issues like the compensation law, the 17 percent value-added tax, land reclamation, and marketing and export issues. As one farmer said, "Slaves do not emerge victorious." Farmers, another pointed out, are the foundation of Palestinian society: "A farmer is an active member of society and needs awareness and knowledge."

Al-Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society has already been mentioned for its significant achievements in empowering youth to become effective citizens in their community. As a result of their participation in the society's programs, children as young as

³⁹ Many other Palestinian SD CSOs (non-Tamkeen grantees) integrate democracy or governance activities into their programs. UPMRC long ago took a lead by integrating youth empowerment and leadership training into its first aid courses. Its approach to the disabled aims to integrate the disabled, including schoolchildren, into their communities. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) includes information on farmers' rights in its agriculture-based trainings. In other examples, both the Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture and the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) approach mental health as a human right and integrate this understanding into all they do.

11, boys and girls alike, have increased their confidence, problem-solving abilities, and awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.⁴⁰

Involvement of Other Stakeholders

The participation of community and other stakeholders in activities of a CSO is another indicator of the CSO's ability to aggregate and articulate citizen issues. It is evident that both service delivery and democracy and governance organizations are effective in this regard, though they may approach the issue in a different way.

For service delivery CSOs, the involvement of other stakeholders is integral to their mission and goals. For organizations dealing with disabilities, for example, other stakeholders may be disabled children, their parents, schools, like-minded organizations, local governments, and even PA officials and institutions. Outreach and stakeholder activities by organizations like Atfaluna and Care for Children with Special Needs Society have already been cited.⁴¹

Democracy and governance organizations may invite constituent participation in other ways, in line with their own programmatic goals. For example:

- **CFI** organizes focus groups among smaller CBOs and their stakeholders to assess their needs before offering training or capacity-building.
- **ATF** invites citizens, academics, CSOs, government and other officials, and other sectors of the society to participate in its town hall meetings, public debates, and other forums where issues like housing rights, victims of torture, and people with disabilities are debated before lawmakers. The goal is to make the lawmakers more aware of, and responsive to, the needs of constituents.
- **PANORAMA** makes a point of involving stakeholders in its activities. Its advisory committee for the Tamkeen-funded project on inclusion of the hearing impaired, for example, consists of such stakeholders as representatives of the Ministry of Education, the General Union of the Disabled, and a number of other organizations.

Integration of D&G into Other Projects

The degree to which democracy and governance activities are built into other projects of the organization has an impact on the general capacity of CSOs to realize sub-IR 3.1.2, to “effectively aggregate and articulate citizen concerns.” This particular achievement is more common among organizations that already have democracy and governance at the core of their missions. For service delivery organizations, the evidence is less consistent. Some organizations are able to integrate these themes into other projects, others have not – and for a variety of reasons may elect not to do so at this time.

⁴⁰ Other local problems addressed by these children are school retention, nutrition and obesity, and cleanliness and health. Some children were also trained in first aid; one 14-year-old girl, Alaa, said she had managed to save the life of her 3-year old brother when he accidentally drank from a bottle filled with Clorox by telling her mother what to do. Alaa's sense of pride, accomplishment, and confidence was palpable.

⁴¹ One CSS notes that a network of disability organizations formed in Gaza was “100 percent” a result of Tamkeen.

The Kalandia Camp Women's Handicraft Cooperative attributes its new Civic Education Department to the impact of the Tamkeen grant. The cooperative has also received a grant from the Welfare Association to integrate civic education into vocational training in hairdressing and other areas.

IPYL in Hebron credits what it learned with the Tamkeen grant for a new European Commission-funded project on democratization and the grassroots community using the media and communications as a tool.

Atfaluna (Gaza) has with the help of the Tamkeen grant institutionalized its information and advocacy activities into an Information Case Management and Client Advocacy Unit (ICCA) staffed by three case managers. This unit helps deaf children and adults and their families with referrals for services, sign language interpretation, counseling, and “a multitude of deaf advocacy issues.”

YMCA Vocational Training Center-Jericho attributes establishment of its new Civic Education Department to the impact of the Tamkeen grant. According to its CSS, the center has received a “green light” from the YMCA general administration to approach other centers about integrating democracy and governance into vocational skills training. YMCA-Jericho hopes to prepare a policy paper on the subject to inform program decisions throughout the YMCA.

Contacts between CSOs and Government Officials

Increased contacts between CSOs or their beneficiaries and local or national government officials are another indicator of increased effectiveness in articulating citizen concerns. Regular democracy and governance and service delivery organizations may have different approaches to this.

Though the lines are not always clear-cut, the findings of this study suggest that a CSO's self-definition plays a role in its relationship with government institutions. It also influences what types of action an organization may be willing or able to undertake: public or behind-the-scenes; collaborative or confrontational; pressure-oriented or cooperative; direct advocacy or empowerment of beneficiaries; and so on. For instance:

- **The Kalandia Camp Women's Handicraft Cooperative**, which defines itself as a charitable organization, is reluctant to voice any criticism of the PA. It is a member of The Union of Charitable Societies (based in Jerusalem), which has taken a position of neutrality vis-à-vis the PA.⁴²
- **The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ)**, defining itself as an applied research organization, said that its relationship with the PA consists of conducting research on environmental issues and supplying the results to government, NGO, and international bodies that design environmental policy. ARIJ would not express a political position regarding the PA.

⁴² The Kalandia cooperative is also a member of the General Union of Palestinian Women and the Palestinian Cooperative Movement.

Service delivery organizations tend to seek collaborative relationships with government officials because collaboration is essential to their work. For instance:

- **Care for Children with Special Needs Society** constantly seeks the help of the Ministry of Education in its efforts to integrate disabled children into schools. CCSNS also works to preserve other healthy collaborative relationships, particularly with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health,
- **The Palestinian Hypertension Association (PHA)**, whose Tankeen-funded project is to organize an awareness campaign for pregnant women and women of childbearing age, also requires good relations with the Ministry of Health and other official institutions so that both partners can do their work effectively.

The history of service delivery CSO cooperation with government bodies (particularly in health, education, and agriculture) goes back to the beginning of the Oslo process; for most service delivery CSOs, this has not changed.

Democracy and governance organizations, on the other hand, have more complex and varied relationships with government bodies. While maintaining good relations with those government institutions that are key to facilitating their work, they are somewhat more likely to resort to direct and public advocacy or pressure tactics than would their service delivery counterparts.

- **Fekra**, the theater group in Gaza, for example, has precipitated direct public run-ins with the Deputy Minister of Education and the Minister of Culture over the issue of performing their latest play in schools.
- **ATF's** town-hall meetings often provide a forum for public confrontations between citizens and officials.

Laws and Policies

The impact of Tamkeen grants on laws and policies is difficult to assess. The CSO community in Palestine actively monitors legislation, issuing recommendations for legislation and using advocacy and pressure-group mechanisms to urge implementation of laws. The CSO community has at critical times mobilized to pressure the PA about provisions of laws like the Basic Law and the Personal Status Law. Continuing contacts between CSO representatives and PLC members over the laws on public health, agriculture, compensation, disability, the Penal Code, and youth are not limited to the efforts of Tamkeen grantees.

Some Tamkeen grantees claim credit for recommending changes to draft laws, pressuring for implementation of laws, and other policy-related matters:

- **ACAD** and **ATF** both claim to have drafted recommendations to amend the Compensation Law, which provides compensation to those whose dwellings are destroyed either by natural means or through Israeli actions.
- **CEOHS** stated that it is working with Birzeit University's Institute of Law, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities and the ministries of Environment and Agriculture to draft a Cultural and National Heritage Law.

- As a research institute, **ARIJ** considers itself “the right arm of various ministries.”
- **CCSNS** in Nablus is working through the Palestinian Union of the Disabled to bring children’s rights to the attention of the PLC.
- **ATF** is working with two Tamkeen grantees in the Gaza Strip on bylaws related to disability.

There is considerable evidence that Tamkeen grantees successfully arm their beneficiaries with advocacy skills and are otherwise effective in arranging contacts between the public and PA ministries, PLC members, and other officials. **CFTA** in Khan Younis, for example, cited its Youth Parliament, where young people learn democracy through practice; staff recounted one incident where a young man who had participated in this project confronted a PLC member at an event and told him, “Your term is over and you shouldn’t be here.” Other Tamkeen beneficiaries have recorded successes in their communities after petitioning municipalities on issues of concern. Tamkeen grantees have recorded major achievements on disability-related policies, rights and protection of women, access to health care, and farmers’ compensation.⁴³

- **Wattan’s** students are currently analyzing the content of the Ministry of Education’s civic education curricula, monitoring concepts and activities and deciding their appropriateness in the Palestinian setting.
- **The Palestinian Hypertension Association (PHA)** is quietly working with the ministries of Health, Social Affairs, and Education in Gaza to introduce improved health education instruction more systematically into school curricula and to promote health awareness throughout government clinics.
- **Al-Lod’s** Guide Mothers campaigned successfully against the cut-off in water supplies in a refugee camp. Another group of women campaigned for removal of a garbage dump close to their homes.
- **ACAD’s** farmers succeeded in obtaining the right to apply for a refund of the 17 percent VAT for qualifying marketing transactions.
- Children in the **Al-Maghazi** convinced the mayor to allocate land for recreation for them.
- **Care for Children with Special Needs Society** obtained the support of school administrations and ministries for their work with teachers and students on respecting the rights of the disabled and accepting them as equal and productive citizens.

⁴³ Palestinians are aware of the larger picture. Several CSOs, including Tamkeen grantees, are preparing for elections by designing projects to inform citizens on their rights and duties, paving the way for their own role in the process. A Tamkeen consultant, Manuel Sanchez de Nogue, arrived in October 2003 to train CSOs in election-related issues, but a representative of non-Tamkeen CSO expresses reservations about prospects for elections any time soon. This person says that while people are learning about their rights, “How would these be applied if the system does not open up and there are no opportunities for participation?”

Reported CSO Concerns

CSOs report some concerns about Tamkeen grants. To the extent these relate to sub-IR 3.1.2 “effectively aggregating and articulating citizen issues,” the following can be noted:

The Challenges of Working Under Occupation

Virtually every CSO made some reference to the extraordinarily harsh conditions under occupation. “The obstacle to good governance is the occupation,” an **ARIJ** representative said. **CFTA**, which caters to vulnerable populations of youth and women in the Khan Younis area, faces major challenges in implementing activities: “Kids are schizophrenic; they learn about their rights but who is going to give them their rights? When kids see all the atrocities around them, they wonder why they should talk about democracy.” A staff member at **Wattan** also referred to the precarious situation now facing CSOs. He tries to convince people about the value of democracy by pointing to the future and the hope that the occupation will end: “If they lost hope [that the occupation will end] that will mean the end of civil society lectures.”

Collaboration and Networking

Service delivery organizations are likely to work with other organizations in their service activity to reach wider populations, gain support for its activities, and have more impact in addressing their issues.⁴⁴ Such is the case with disability issues, women’s health, farmer’s concerns, and so on. Other organizations, democracy and governance CSOs in particular, tend to boast of their unilateral achievements and some even dismissed collaboration with others as an effective way to aggregate and articulate citizen issues (for example **ATF**, **ACAD**).

The Reputation of CSOs

People consulted for this study who were outside of the Tamkeen community, as well as a few Tamkeen grantees, questioned the general reputation of CSOs in Palestine. The most common concerns are elitism, particularly among the larger democracy and governance CSOs in the Jerusalem and Ramallah areas; donor-driven strategies and projects; CSOs being out of touch with grassroots issues (too much “talk,” people are fed up with “workshops” and “trainings”); and general lack of credibility. If CSOs truly want to encourage reform, democratization, and good governance at the national level, I was told, they need to clean up their own house first. Some CSOs (including a few Tamkeen grantees) were accused of being politicized and lacking transparency and accountability. Several people noted that the leadership of such organizations had not changed in 20 years or more and that people were tired of seeing the same faces dominate the stage.

Those interviewed readily acknowledged the need for transparency and the rule of law within the PA. However, not everyone was convinced that CSOs can be entrusted to spearhead this when they themselves have not had internal elections or do not practice democratic decision-

⁴⁴ The CDU, for example, claims 50,000 cooperative members in the OPTs. Along with their families, they would constitute 10 to 12 percent of the total Palestinian population, a sizeable sector to be targeted by programs like Tamkeen’s. CDU is not clear why the Tamkeen grant was not renewed – especially when its activities by definition combine sustainable development with democratic practices.

making and good governance.⁴⁵ Such criticisms were levied at Palestinian civil society in general, however, rather than being directed specifically at Tamkeen grantees. Except for one or two of the larger non-Tamkeen service delivery organizations, service delivery CSOs were not criticized as often as democracy and governance organizations. Indeed, a few Tamkeen grantees, like the **Al-Lod Charitable Society**, have made a point of conducting elections to their general assemblies and practicing good governance internally as another step to gaining credibility and legitimacy in their communities.

Lack of Impact Assessment Mechanisms

The difficulty in assessing how much impact Tamkeen grants had in realizing IR 3.1.2, aggregating citizen issues, and IR 3.1.3, “disseminating information to citizens on public issues,” stems from the absence of built-in mechanisms at CSOs to accurately measure impact, as contrasted to outcomes or immediate results. CSOs of all types report a variety of measurable results, such as increased numbers (or additional groups) of beneficiaries and greater frequency or variety of planned activities. A few, as noted earlier, use a before/after survey to assess outcomes. Other measures of effectiveness can only be gleaned from “success stories” and other anecdotal evidence. Though impressive, these do not necessarily point to enduring impact.⁴⁶

CSOs explained the lack of built-in impact assessment mechanisms by saying they have no experience in designing such systems. A few, like **Wattan** and **PANORAMA**, welcomed the idea and hoped that Tamkeen or other funders would help them do so. Others noted that the grants did not require impact assessment and also that the project’s term was short, up to 18 months, after which the CSO would move on to other things.

Impact on Target Groups

Success in aggregating and articulating citizen issues varies by CSO size, location, and beneficiaries. Many of the service delivery organizations funded by Tamkeen enjoyed their most significant results among the direct beneficiaries of their services and in the community in which they are located. **Al-Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society** and the **Culture and Free Thought Association**, both in Gaza, provide impressive illustrations of this.⁴⁷

The impact of Tamkeen grants for both service delivery and democracy and governance projects targeting youth and children is especially pronounced, as it is in the disability sector, as evidenced by the achievements of such organizations as **Atfaluna**, **CCSNS**, and **PANORAMA**.

⁴⁵ I was encouraged to drop questions concerning the internal democratic practices of Tamkeen grantees, so the observations in this section are largely anecdotal.

⁴⁶ See Tamkeen, Doc. 217.66.241.195/Share Program/Monitoring and Evaluation/Impact Assessment Files – for consultants/Success Stories/Success Stories –Draft 1/. Thirty-five summaries prepared between March 24 and August 24, 2003, are included, among them most of the CSOs visited in this study. Many stories pertain to projects in the Gaza Strip; female beneficiaries (especially girls) are emphasized in virtually all cases; several have to do with empowering the disabled; all clearly show how D&G activities (from instilling knowledge to changing values and perceptions to encouraging public participation) are integrated with service delivery. In other words, learning and empowerment proceeds through direct participation in dealing with issues of direct import to beneficiaries and central to the mission of an SD CSO. Results also illustrate the impact of the projects on others beyond the direct beneficiaries: parents of young children, municipal and other local officials, school teachers and administrators, other local community organizations, businesses, and so on.

⁴⁷ Closure, checkpoints, denial of freedom of movement, and confining Palestinians to their immediate localities have intensified over the last three years, restricting the spheres of influence of CSOs, particularly those that are smaller ones and in remote areas.

Evidence of the impact of Tamkeen-funded projects on other target populations is more difficult to calculate. Clearly, projects that target farmers (**ACAD**) and women (**Al-Lod**, **Kalandia**, **Al-Islah**) have made an impact in the distinct communities they serve. Much of this impact, according to those interviewed, manifests itself mainly as changes in knowledge (gaining information about democracy, the rule of law, rights and duties) and in certain practices, as illustrated in many examples already given. Many of those interviewed, including representatives of Tamkeen CSO grantees and several beneficiaries, pointed out that changing attitudes and values is much harder. Some CSO representatives saw little concrete evidence of a fundamental change in attitudes and values among the adult populations served. Some possible explanations for this are offered in the conclusion.

4.3.3. CSOs Effectively Disseminate Information to Citizens on Public Issues

Tamkeen grants have enhanced the ability of CSOs to effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues. Grantees have made effective use of publications, media appearances, civic education forums, and other activities to inform citizens on issues of concern. Smaller CSOs, particularly service delivery organizations and those in remote areas, clearly have more limited reach, but they too have made strides in integrating information-sharing into their service delivery activities.

Filling a Niche: D&G and SD Organizations Compared

Service delivery organizations are able to fill a niche by combining information on democracy and governance directly into their service delivery. CSSs, CSOs, and beneficiaries all report greater receptivity to such information when it is linked to tangible benefits. Farmers, women, and others seeking particular services were adamant in saying they would not come to listen to “talk.” Other needs are too pressing for people struggling to find jobs, secure an income, and feed and protect their families. As one CSS pointed out, “People come for the service first; then they get engaged in the other activities.” **ACAD**, **Al-Lod**, and **Kalandia** are prime examples of this.

Democracy and governance organizations are more effective disseminators of information to the general public. Many democracy and governance CSOs have made good use of Tamkeen grants to extend their outreach, offering more publications, seminars, civic education sessions, and other activities to broader target groups. Civic education as a means of instilling democratic ideals is growing in popularity among the projects offered by democracy and governance and even service delivery organizations. For instance:

- **The Educational Network Center (EdNet)**, whose Tamkeen-funded project is to “strengthen the role of education in building civil society in Palestine,” offers sessions in civic education to schoolteachers across the West Bank (circumstances permitting). Sessions cover knowledge, values, and practices of democracy and governance.
- **Wattan** offers civic education training for youth; some beneficiaries have gone on to launch projects in their own communities.

Increased Communication

There has been a marked increase in the volume of information put out. From pamphlets outlining citizen rights to publications clarifying aspects of the law to informational packets discussing democracy to publications targeting children, CSOs have used Tamkeen grants to improve their capacity to disseminate information. **Ed Net**, **ACAD**, and **CFI**,⁴⁸ to name only a few, offer an impressive array of books, booklets, pamphlets, and other publications. Tamkeen grantees have also used other communication outlets to great effect:

- **ARIJ** uses television to inform citizens about environmental issues. It is preparing to disseminate information gathered with the help of the Tamkeen grant, a responsibility it takes very seriously because as one staff member says, “Once there is environmental erosion, it can’t be reversed. It is lost.”
- **Al-Lod’s** Guide Mothers appeared in a televised debate on children’s rights with PLC member Dalal Salameh. Salameh, who recalled the forum well, praised the women not only for their impressive and detailed knowledge of the laws but also for using television to disseminate their messages. The Guide Mothers are justifiably proud of their accomplishments; before participating in this project, most were diffident. One Guide Mother says about the project, “We can now hear a [political] speech and understand what it means. We can analyze what we hear and express our opinion.” Another said, “Civil society is the ability to express ourselves, to know our rights, and to share information. We can break the barriers that kept us from talking to others.”
- **Fekra’s** performances are unparalleled ways of disseminating information to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Audiences discuss the issues after the plays and act out their own versions of the issue on stage.
- **Ashtar’s** Forum Theater allows similar participation, with audience members invited to discuss issues the play presented. This is “democracy in practice,” according to Ashtar staff members.

Reported CSO Concerns

CSOs and others report some concerns about the Tamkeen grants. To the extent these relate to IR 3.1.3, “effective dissemination of information to citizens on public issues,” the following points can be noted:

Who Reads?

Beyond the impressive numbers and reported increases in information dissemination, it is difficult to assess whether people other than direct CSO beneficiaries pay attention to or are influenced by this informational glut. With well over 1,400 CSOs active in the OPTs, there

⁴⁸ CFI, for example, publishes booklets on various aspects of rights and the law with titles like “Political Parties,” Local Government,” “Elections,” The Judiciary,” “The Basic Law,” and “Democracy and Individual Rights.” EdNet publishes stories and guides for children on civic education topics, as well as educational material for teachers with titles like “Conflict Resolution in Teaching and Learning,” and “Using Concepts of Civic Education and Human Rights in Teaching and Learning,” and “Active Learning.” ACAD publishes a booklet featuring the text of the 1999 draft Compensation Law.

may be a limit to how much the population can digest.⁴⁹ Some representatives of non-Tamkeen CSOs voiced the opinion that CSO publications are for the consumption of donors (to demonstrate that they are making use of grants), for the international community, or at best for other local CSOs. Even when publications are in Arabic, these people remained skeptical that the average person knew or cared about them.

I did not have the opportunity to speak with more than a small sample of non-Tamkeen CSOs. Perhaps the most telling comment I heard was that people knew little or nothing about Tamkeen's projects beyond familiarity with a handful of its most prominent grantees.

Issues seem to have more resonance within local communities, and dissemination of information is more successful when project beneficiaries themselves appear in the media or in public and discuss what they learned. People are impressed when they see their own mothers, brothers, or children debating a PLC member on television or confronting a legislator at a forum or town hall meeting.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that – with certain qualifications – service delivery organizations are effective in strengthening the role of CSOs in the OPTs and compare favorably in this regard with democracy and governance organizations. Service delivery CSOs that succeed in integrating democracy and governance elements into their activities may be highly effective in reaching sectors of the population not usually targeted by democracy and governance organizations (women, farmers, marginalized populations, and people in remote areas). Tamkeen grants have been critical in enabling CSOs to undertake projects in youth empowerment and leadership, women's rights, citizen awareness, and the importance of good governance.

5.1. Conclusions

Democracy and governance and service delivery organizations tend to differ with this assessment. The former point to the relative inexperience of service delivery organizations with democracy and governance programming and accuse them of tacking on democracy and governance projects merely to get funding. Some democracy and governance organizations maintain that service delivery organizations should do what they do best – provide services – and leave it to them to deliver on democracy and governance-related projects and training, for example, by offering civic education to PANORAMA or CFI beneficiaries. Some phrased this as a need for “specialization,” or “different areas of expertise,” or a sensible “division of labor” in which all sectoral efforts would contribute their specialties to the whole.

A few service delivery CSOs appear to have fallen short in integrating democracy and governance into their service-related activities. **Al-Islah** (Jericho), for example, hired a trainer (trained by **CFI**) to offer civic education sessions at its clinics two or three times a week but the trainer could not appreciate why she should work beyond her contracted hours to instill civic knowledge and values among doctors and other health care personnel so as to weave such understandings into all levels of health care delivery. Resistance to integrating

⁴⁹ This figure refers to CSOs licensed by the Ministry of Interior. Other types of organizations are registered by other ministries: An estimated 1,200 cooperatives are registered with the Ministry of Labor's Department of Cooperatives, and Ashtar, for example, is registered with the Ministry of Culture. Final tallies of all types of organizations in the OPTs may reach as high as 5,000.

democracy and governance beyond what is required to meet a grant's conditions may thus emanate from conditions internal to the organization, such as differences among staff or board members, resistance from the target populations served (in this case reportedly some Bedouin), or strained organizational resources.

Service delivery CSOs in turn characterize democracy and governance CSOs as elitist and removed from the concerns of the general population. They perceive themselves as better placed to elicit interest in democracy and governance issues by linking them directly to services and rooting them in the concerns of the community.

Youth

Important evidence of impact is already discernible where youth-oriented democracy and governance activities are concerned. The most effective projects are civic education and youth leadership and empowerment programs, characteristic of a number of Tamkeen grantees of both types. Tamkeen grantees, noted one CSO representative, “have created a youth that is more outspoken, more courageous.” Gains in this sector are cumulative; everyone was in full agreement that they should be built upon and expanded.

Women and Marginalized Groups

The impact of Tamkeen-funded projects on women and other social groups is mixed and less obvious. With notable exceptions, such as the **Kalandia Camp Women's Handicraft Cooperative**, **Al-Lod**, and the **Culture and Free Thought Association**, women still appear neglected by CSO activities.⁵⁰

For other marginalized groups, closures and restrictions on movement have forced organizations to limit their activities. **Ashtar**, for example, has been working with more privileged school children in urban areas around Ramallah rather than venturing into the refugee camps, as originally envisioned. Other CSOs (**EdNet**, for example) are making plans to resume work in remote localities. For now, organizations serving remote areas tend to be of the smaller service delivery type, like **Al-Islah** and the **Culture and Free Thought Association**.

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills

Findings suggest that there is increased knowledge about democracy and governance issues, as well as increased public participation on certain issues. However, apart from youth, Tamkeen-funded projects appear not to be highly effective in transmitting values or changing attitudes.

There could be a number of possible explanations for this. For example, the lack of mechanisms to assess changes in the first place makes it difficult to know whether attitudes have been transformed. Or it may be in some way rooted in project design and implementation. Perhaps the ineffectiveness relates to the cumulative and long-term nature of change, which would require that people be consistently exposed to democracy and governance activities and practices over time to make a difference. Perhaps the pressing needs and anxiety-ridden conditions in which the majority of Palestinians live leave them

⁵⁰ The reason for this is not entirely clear. One representative of a non-Tamkeen CSO ventured that “women's empowerment” is no longer fashionable. More likely, women are simply too preoccupied with the demands of daily life.

with little time or energy to engage with such values. Yet again, the explanation may lie in values and attitudes in the social and cultural environment. Or perhaps compared to the more coherent sector of youth, the scattered nature of such projects – each in a separate locality with its own target group – makes it difficult to assess total impact on adult populations.⁵¹

Policy Changes

The exact magnitude of CSO contributions to reform in the PA, democratization and good governance, and changes to policies and laws as a result of Tamkeen grants are similarly difficult to assess. Palestinians of all kinds reported that significant changes will not occur in the short term and not under current conditions, but they insisted that efforts to preserve the space of CSOs in Palestinian society must continue and will pay off when conditions are ripe.

Tamkeen grantees and other CSOs have been effective in monitoring legislation and drafting recommendations and by-laws relating, for example, to the disability and compensation laws. CSOs, including Tamkeen grantees, are also successful in disseminating information to the public about certain laws, such as the Personal Status Law, the Basic Law, the Labor Law, and the Disability Law. One PLC official praised Tamkeen and similar initiatives for providing opportunities for people to participate responsibly in democracy-building. The integration of democracy and governance into service delivery activities is essential to this effort, he said.

However, other people interviewed cautioned that they do not see much CSO impact on policy or legislation. One official attributed this in part to CSO “selectivity,” asking, “Where were the CSOs in all the dozens of laws that have been passed? They should be working on issues that affect the well-being of society, not concentrate mainly on laws that affect them.”⁵²

Some CSO representatives believed that CSOs may not be well-equipped for advocacy, so they tend to choose “safe” issues or to cooperate and collaborate with the PA. Other explanations about limited CSO political influence were laid at the door of the PA itself. I was told that compared to other Middle Eastern countries, Palestinians enjoy considerable freedom of speech and expression, but Chairman Arafat and the PA would brook no interference in what they actually do. “We can say what we want, and the PA does what it wants,” is how one prominent non-Tamkeen CSO official put it.⁵³

Others cited the crisis in the PA, particularly since its virtual destruction during the Israeli incursions of spring 2002. They noted that conditions under the Intifada have generated more pressing concerns than passing a youth law or implementing a disability law. The constant rotation of officials is also a major hindrance to concerted advocacy: A sympathetic minister

⁵¹ As an illustration, two interviewees mentioned a CSO project (not funded by Tamkeen) that trained 20,000 Palestinian teachers in civic education. An assessment by the MOE with the help of another CSO reportedly found “negligible” benefits in terms of changes to perceptions and attitudes among teachers.

⁵² This official was referring to the massive campaigning that took place around the NGO law of a few years ago that was not repeated for any other legislation. Another PA official claims that CSOs have been “regressing” in recent years; they are no longer campaigning about important legislative matters.

⁵³ This person brings up another interesting point about CSO/PA relations, that secularist and liberal CSOs tend to see themselves as in alliance with the PA against the Islamists. This may be why CSOs have been unwilling or unable to mobilize strong positions and advocate forcefully on legislation.

may be removed or replaced and a local official may calculate that survival depends more on the good graces of the PA than on being responsive to constituents.⁵⁴

Long-Term Prospects

There was widespread consensus among both Tamkeen and non-Tamkeen CSOs that Palestinian society should be democratized and that both the NGO and the government sectors (and probably the private sector as well) could benefit from reform and good governance. In the final analysis, Palestinian society needs sustainability at all levels: in government bodies, a strong and effective civil society, and a viable private sector, and especially in the socioeconomic underpinnings of sustainable development. For Mustafa Barghouthi (UPMRC), “History has shown that in the Palestinian context, civil society is not built by telling people how to practice democracy; rather it is built by empowering people to practice democracy.”⁵⁵ As a PA representative described the role of CSOs, “You’re teaching me to take responsibility as a citizen, so you need to take responsibility to collaborate with others.”

The challenge is to make CSOs true partners with other institutions in sustainable development, democratization, and good governance. Preserving the space of CSOs to participate in the public discourse and strengthening their ability to do so may depend on that.

5.2. Recommendations

For Tamkeen

- Continue support of service delivery projects that have a democracy and governance component and stay flexible enough to support projects that are in tune with perceived needs, especially in the service delivery sector.
- Continue to support a diversified group of CSOs, especially emerging and smaller service delivery CSOs in the Gaza Strip and remote areas and those working with marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- Continue identifying youth and children as a strategic sector and if possible expand related projects in both service delivery and democracy and governance organizations.
- Support projects that integrate the practice of democracy and governance directly into activities relevant to the immediate needs of people (farmers, women, marginalized communities, disabled, etc.)
- Support democracy and governance and service delivery projects that empower and prompt direct beneficiaries and other constituents to act in a public way, perhaps through training in advocacy skills, pressure groups, and petitioning.

⁵⁴ CSOs report that the PA has made progress in governance-related issues, especially financial accountability. But this improvement, many also acknowledge, may have been the result of pressures from the European Union and the United States rather than from CSO themselves.

⁵⁵ Mustafa Barghouthi (n.d.), *supra*, note 13. His comments point to a need for continuity in the Tamkeen project and others like it, especially where development, SD, and D&G functions of civil society are inert.

- Remain flexible in support of varying CSO definitions and operationalization of “democracy” and “governance” at different political and social junctures.
- To the extent possible, encourage cooperation between CSOs to strengthen civil society through public discourse and increase its impact.
- Encourage more established CSOs (whether democracy and governance or service delivery) to help emerging and smaller CSOs with capacity-building and project design and implementation.
- Consider enhanced support to the cooperative sector, where service delivery and democracy and governance are already organically linked in the core sector mission and practice.
- Investigate why changes to knowledge are apparently not accompanied by changes to values and attitudes in some sectors and assess how to integrate values more effectively into program areas.
- Enter data and tabulate results of the PMP plan administered earlier and evaluate the significance of any correlations to future programming trends.
- Keep at the forefront of all programming the pervasive reality of occupation.

For USAID and Tamkeen

- Continue to encourage and monitor CSO internal accountability, good governance, and transparency, collaborating on this to the extent possible with other funders, such as UNDP, the Welfare Foundation, and FNF.
- Invest in “democratization” as long-term vision and process.
- Support democracy and governance projects that in some form incorporate sustainable development (as compared to “services”).
- Encourage CSOs to reduce dependence on single sources of funding to promote sustainability (capacity-building, resources, diversified funding, income-generating, use of volunteers, etc.).
- Help CSOs to design mechanisms for internal impact assessment and build them into their programs (specific indicators, baseline studies, performance monitoring, and post-project impact assessments).
- Mitigate, to the extent possible, fall-out from the Anti-Terrorism Certificate; assure Palestinian CSO grantees and the wider community of the continuing Tamkeen commitment to Palestinian well-being.